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Large-Paper Edition

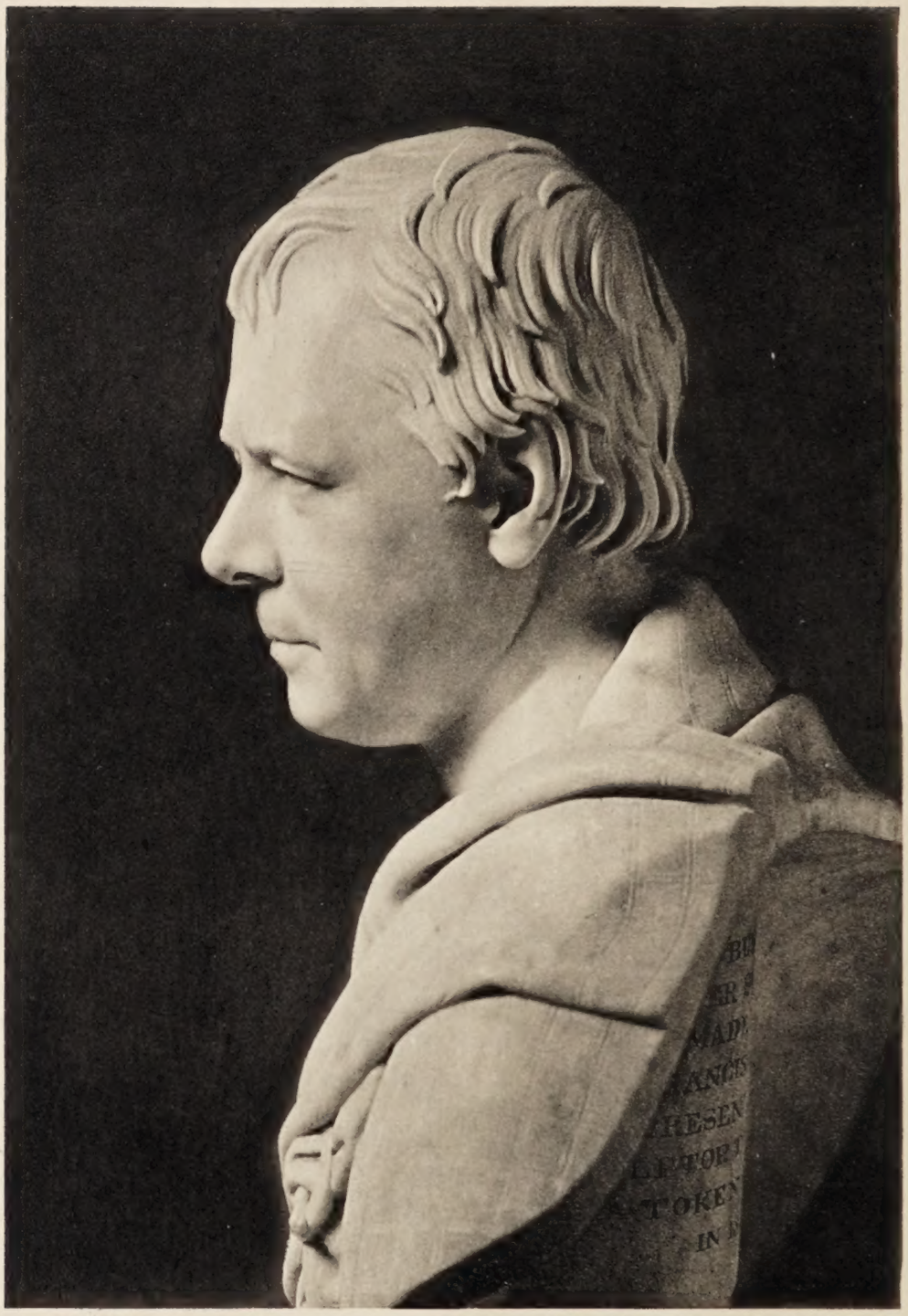
LOCKHART'S

LIFE OF SCOTT

COPIOUSLY ANNOTATED AND ABUNDANTLY ILLUSTRATED

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOL. VIII



WALTER SCOTT IN 1820

From the pencil sketch by Chantrey

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

BART.

BY

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VIII

TORONTO
GEORGE N. MORANG AND COMPANY, LIMITED
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SIR WALTER SCOTT

CHAPTER LXIII

EXCURSION TO IRELAND. — RECEPTION IN DUBLIN. — WICKLOW. — EDGEWORTHSTOWN. — KILLARNEY. — CORK. — CASTLE BLARNEY, ETC. — LETTERS FROM MOORE AND CANNING. — LLANGOLLEN. — ELLERAY. — STORRS. — LOWTHER

1825

Before the Court of Session rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway, of which we have his impressions in the Lighthouse Diary of 1814; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of .seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons, who had been serviceable to him in his labors upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind

of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it.

On the day after he despatched the following letter, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son gazetted as Captain.

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., 15TH HUSSARS, 10 STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN.

EDINBURGH, 16th June, 1825.

MY DEAR WALTER, — I shall wait with some impatience for this night's Gazette. I have written to Coutts to pay the money so soon as you are in possession.

On Saturday, 11th, I went to Blair-Adam, and had a delicious stroll among the woods. The roe-deer are lying as thick there as in the Highlands, and I dare say they must be equally so at Lochore: so you will have some of the high game. They are endeavoring to destroy them, which they find very difficult. It is a pity they do so much mischief to the woods, for otherwise they are the most beautiful objects in nature; and were they at Abbotsford, I could not, I think, have the heart to make war on them. Two little fawns came into the room at tea-time and drank cream. They had the most beautiful dark eyes and little dark muzzles, and were scarce so big as Miss Ferguson's Italian greyhound. The Chief Commissioner offered them to me; but to keep them tame would have been impossible, on account of the dogs, and to turn them loose would have been wilfully entailing risk on the plantations which have cost me so much money and trouble. There was then a talk of fattening them for the kitchen, a proposal which would have driven mamma distracted.

We spent Monday on a visit to Lochore, and in planning the road which is so much wanted. The Chief Commissioner is an excellent manager, and has undertaken to treat with Mr. Wemyss of East Blair, through a part of whose property the line lies, but just at a corner, and where it will be as convenient for his property as Lochore.

I am glad Jane looks after her own affairs. It is very irksome, to be sure; but then one must do it, or be eaten up by their servants, like Actæon by his hounds. Talking of hounds, I have got a second Maida, but he is not yet arrived. Nimrod is his name.

I keep my purpose as expressed in my last. I might, perhaps, persuade mamma to come, but she is unhappy in steamboats, bad beds, and all the other inconveniences of travelling. Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson, as I hear, are thinking of stirring towards you. I hope they will allow our visit to be over in the first instance, as it would overtax Jane and you — otherwise I should like to see the merry knight in Ireland, where I suppose he would prove *Ipsis Hibernis Hibernior*, more Irish than the natives.

I have given Charles his choice between France and Ireland, and shall have his answer in two or three days. Will he be *de trop* if we can pack him up in the little barouche?

Your commentary on Sir D. Dundas's confused hash of regulations, which, for the matter of principle, might be shortened to a dozen, puts me in mind of old Sir William Erskine's speech to him, when all was in utter confusion at the retreat from before Dunkirk, and Sir William came down to protect the rear. In passing Sir David, the tough old veteran exclaimed, "Davie, ye donnert idiot, where 's a' your *peevioys* (pivots) the day?"

As to your early hours, no man ought to be in bed at seven in summer time — I never am; your four o'clock is rather premature. — Yours, with kindest remembrances to Jane, WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. — Yours just received — dateless as was your former. I suppose it is a family fault. What I have written will show that the cash matters are *bang-up*. A comparison of the dates will show there has been no voluntary delay on my part; indeed, what motive could

I have for leaving money without interest in the hands of a London banker? But we are corresponding at a triangle, when you write to me and I to London. I will write to Jane to scold her for her ladylike fears about our reception: to find you happy will be the principal part of my welcome; for the rest, a slice of plain meat of any kind — a cigar — and a little *potheen*, are worth turtle and burgundy to my taste. As for poor, dear, stupid * * * *, there is only one answer, which the clown in one of Shakespeare's plays says will be a fitting reply to *all* questions — *Oh Lord, sir! ! !*

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition; Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter.[1] We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending

[1] [Scott wrote to Lady Louisa Stuart, July 7, of his proposed Irish tour: "Anne and John Lockhart go with me — the latter to save me all the plagues incident to travelling. Sophia stays to take care of her little delicate baby and Lady Scott. Charles proposes to make a tour in the Highlands, so we are as a family unusually dispersed. Charles is very different from Walter, — has a turn for literature, as the other has for the exact sciences which apply to the art of war; and, although a modest boy, he is not indisposed to profit by those advantages which my connection with literature may afford him. Walter, on the contrary, conscious that the gods have not made him poetical, is much distressed by the attentions which he sometimes meets with under the impression that the Lion's whelp is to be honored after the Lion himself; and he wants the experience of such an often-hunted and experienced Lion as myself to get gracefully and composedly out of the toils. This has been a besetting grievance with the young soldier ever since he fought deadly battle at the High School with the boys who called him 'The Lady of the Lake,' and I scarce think he has yet learned to reconcile himself to the reflected dignity of his literary descent; although he should praise the bridge that has carried him over, for I do not know by what other roads I was to seek out for him a lairdship and a troop of horse. I have my own internal qualms about Dublin, where I am told the Lion Hunters are already preparing stake and net. . . . I am, however, famed for bearing my faculties meekly, and this is only a private groan of apprehension in a friendly ear, —

'For if I should as Lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.'

So says Snug, the best and discreetest of Lions." — *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. p. 294.]

a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast. Sir Walter kept no diary during this excursion, and the bustle and tumult throughout were such that he found time to write but very few letters. From my own to the ladies left at home, I could easily draw up a pretty exact journal of our proceedings;[1] but I shall content myself with noting a few particulars more immediately connected with the person of Scott — for I am very sensible, on looking over what I set down at the moment, that there was hardly opportunity even for him to draw any conclusions of serious value on the structure and ordinary habits of society in Ireland, to say nothing of the vexed questions of politics and administration; and such features of natural beauty and historical interest as came under his view have been painted over and over again by native writers, with whom hasty observers should not be ambitious of competing.

The steamboat, besides a crowd of passengers of all possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations and reflections it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes; — the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to a land where beggary is the staple of life. The captain assured us that he had navigated nearly forty years between the West of Scotland and the sister island, and that his freights from the Clyde were very commonly of this description; pigs and potatoes being the usual return. Sir Walter rather irritated a military passenger (a stout old Highlander), by asking whether it had never occurred to him that the beautiful checkery of the clan tartans might

[1] [These informal, intimate, and, of necessity, hurriedly written letters, do indeed form a graphic and entertaining journal of the tour. They serve as memoranda for the writer's narrative, even when direct extracts from them are not given. They can be found in full in the *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 296–344.]

have originated in a pious wish on the part of the Scottish Gael to imitate the tatters of the parent race. After soothing the veteran into good-humor by some anecdotes of the Celtic splendors of August, 1822, he remarked that if the Scotch Highlanders were really descended in the main from the Irish blood, it seemed to him the most curious and difficult problem in the world to account for the startling contrasts in so many points of their character, temper, and demeanor; and entered into some disquisition on this subject, which I am sorry I cannot repeat in detail. The sum of his opinion was, that while courage and generous enthusiasm of spirit, kindness of heart, and great strength and purity of domestic affection, characterized them equally, the destruction, in the course of endless feuds, and wars, and rebellions, of the native aristocracy of Ireland, had robbed that people of most of the elements of internal civilization; and avowed his belief, that had the Highlanders been deprived, under similar circumstances, of their own chiefs, they would have sunk, from the natural poverty of their regions, into depths of barbarity not exampled even in the history of Ireland. The old soldier (who had taken an early opportunity of intimating his own near relationship to the chief of his sept) nodded assent, and strutted from our part of the deck with the dignity of a MacTurk. — "But then," Sir Walter continued — (watching the Colonel's retreat) — "but then comes the queerest point of all. How is it that our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so supereminently dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy? The Highlander never understands wit or humor. — Paddy, despite all his misery and privations, overflows with both. I suppose he is the gayest fellow in the world, except the only worse-used one still, the West-Indian nigger. This is their make-up — but it is to me the saddest feature in the whole story."

A voyage down the Firth of Clyde is enough to make anybody happy: nowhere can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery: on one hand, dark mountains and castellated shores — on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns — the bright estuary between, alive with shipping, and diversified with islands.

It may be supposed how delightful such a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy; crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed; and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old Bailie of Glasgow sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure; though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session, — and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw, as for the misty antiquities of Balclutha, or the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. I remember how this new acquaintance chuckled when he, towards the conclusion of our first bowl of punch, said he was not surprised to find himself gathering much instruction from the Bailie's conversation on his favorite topics, since the most eminent and useful of the police magistrates of London (Colquhoun) had served his apprenticeship in the Town Chamber of Glasgow. The Bailie insisted for a second bowl, and volunteered to be the manufacturer; "for," quoth he (with a sly wink), "I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my*

father, the deacon." Scott smiled in acquiescence, and, the ladies having by this time withdrawn, said he was glad to find the celebrated beverage of the city of St. Mungo had not fallen into desuetude. The Bailie extolled the liquor he was brewing, and quoted Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity for the case of a gentleman well known to himself, who lived till ninety, and had been drunk upon it every night for half a century. But Bailie * * * * was a devout elder of the kirk, and did not tell his story without one or two groans that his doctrine should have such an example to plead. Sir Walter said he could only hope that manners were mended in other respects since the days when a popular minister of the last age (one Mr. Thom), renowned for satirical humor, as well as for high-flying zeal, had demolished all his own chances of a Glasgow benefice, by preaching before the Town Council from this text in Hosea: "Ephraim's drink is sour, and he hath committed whoredom continually." The Bailie's brow darkened (like Nicol Jarvie's when they *misca'd Rab*); he groaned deeper than before, and said he feared "Tham o' Govan was at heart a ne'er-do-weel." He, however, refilled our glasses as he spoke; and Scott, as he tasted his, said, "Weel, weel, Bailie, Ephraim was not so far wrong as to the matter of drink." A gay little Irish Squireen (a keener Protestant even than our "merchant and magistrate") did not seem to have discovered the Great Unknown until about this time, and now began to take a principal share in the conversation. To the bowl of Ephraim he had from the first done all justice. He broke at once into the heart of the debatable land; and after a few fierce tirades against Popery, asked the Highland Colonel, who had replaced the master of the steamer at the head of the table, to give *the glorious memory.* The prudent Colonel affected not to hear until this hint had been thrice repeated, watching carefully meanwhile the demeanor of a sufficiently mixed company. The gen-

eral pushing in of glasses, and perhaps some freemasonry symptoms besides — (for we understood that he had often served in Ireland) — had satisfied him that all was right, and he rose and announced the Protestant Shibboleth with a voice that made the lockers and rafters ring again. Bailie * * * * rose with grim alacrity to join in the cheers; and then our Squireen proposed, in his own person, what, he said, always ought to be the second toast among good men and true. This was nothing else than *the heroic memory*, which, from our friend's preliminary speech, we understood to be the memory of *Oliver Cromwell*. Sir Walter winced more shrewdly than his Bailie had done about Ephraim's transgressions, but swallowed his punch, and stood up, glass in hand, like the rest, though an unfortunate fit of coughing prevented his taking part in their huzzas. This feature of Irish loyalism was new to the untravelled Scotch of the party. On a little reflection, however, we thought it not so unnatural. Our little Squireen boasted of being himself descended from a sergeant in Cromwell's army; and he added that "the best in Ireland" had similar pedigrees to be proud of. He took care, however, to inform us that his own great ancestor was a real *jontleman* all over, and behaved as such; "for," said he, "when Oliver gave him his order for the lands, he went to the widow, and tould her he would neither turn out her nor the best looking of her daughters; 'so get the best dinner you can, old lady,' quoth he, 'and parade the whole lot of them, and I 'll pick.' " Which was done, it seems, accordingly; and probably no conquest ever wanted plenty of such alleviations.

When we got upon deck again after our carousal, we found it raining heavily, and the lady passengers in great misery; which state of things continued till we were within sight of Belfast. We got there about nine in the morning, and I find it set down that we paid four guineas for the conveyance of the carriage, and a guinea apiece for ourselves; in 1837, I understand the charge

for passengers is not more than half-a-crown a head in the cabin, and sixpence in the steerage — so rapidly has steam-navigation extended in the space of twelve years. Sir Walter told us he well remembered being on board of the first steamer that ever was launched in Britain, in 1812. For some time, that one awkward machine went back and forward between Glasgow and Greenock, and it would have looked like a cock-boat beside any one of the hundreds of magnificent steamships that now cover the Firth of Clyde. It is also written in my pocket-book, that the little Orange Squireen was particularly kind and serviceable at our landing — knocking about the swarm of porters that invaded the vessel on anchoring in a style quite new to us, with slang equally Irish — *e. g.*, "Your fingers are all thumbs, I see — put that (portmanteau) in your teeth, you grampus," etc., etc.

The following is part of the first letter I wrote to my wife from Dublin: —

"Belfast is a thriving bustling place, surrounded with smart villas, and built much like a second-rate English town; yet there we saw the use of the imported rags forthwith. One man, apparently happy and gay, returning to his work (a mason seemingly) from breakfast, with pipe in mouth, had a coat of which I don't believe any three inches together were of the same color or the same stuff — red, black, yellow, green — cloth, velveteen, corduroy, fustian — the complete image of a tattered coverlid originally made on purpose of particularly small patches — no shirt, and almost no breeches; — yet this is the best part of Ireland, and the best population. What shall we see in the South?

"Erin deserves undoubtedly the style of *Green Erin*. We passed through high and low country, rich and poor, but none that was not greener than Scotland ever saw. The husbandry to the north seemed rather careless than bad — I should say *slovenly*, for everything is cultivated, and the crops are fine, though the appearance is quite spoiled by the bad, or oftener the *no* fences; and, above all, to unaccustomed eyes, by the human wretchedness everywhere visible even there. Your

papa says, however, that he sees all over the North marks of an improving country; that the new houses are all greatly better than the old, etc. He is no doubt right as to the towns, and even villages on the highway, but I can't imagine the *newest* hut of the peasantry to have been preceded by worse even in the days of Malachi with the collar of gold. They are of clay without chimneys, and without any opening for light, except the door and the smoke-hole in the roof. When there is a window, it seldom has even one pane of glass, and I take it the aperture is only a summer luxury, to be closed up with the ready trowel whenever the winter comes. The filth, darkness, and squalor of these dens and their inhabitants, are beyond imagination, even to us who have traversed so often the wildest of our own Highland glens; yet your father swears he has not yet seen one face decidedly careworn and unhappy; on the contrary, an universal good-humor and merriment, and, to us, every sort of civility from the poor people; as yet few beggars. An old man at Dunleer having got some pence from Anne while the carriage stopt, an older woman came forward to sell gooseberries, and we declining these, she added that we might as well give her an alms too then, for she was an old *struggler*. Anne thought she said *smuggler*, and dreamt of potheen, but she meant that she had done her best to resist the 'sea of troubles;' whereas her neighbor, the professed mendicant, had yielded to the stream too easily. The Unknown says he shall recollect the word, which deserves to be classical. We slept at Dundalk, a poor little town by the shore, but with a magnificent Justice-hall and jail — a public building superior, I think, to any in Edinburgh, in the midst of a place despicably dirty and miserable."

When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's, sent in his card, with a polite offer to attend him over the field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted; — Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (The Crossing of the Water), as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday, the 14th, we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

That very evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner; and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr. Kyle, now Bishop of Cork), announcing that the University desired to pay him the very high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *diploma*. The Archbishop of Dublin (the celebrated Dr. Magee), though surrounded with severe domestic afflictions at the time, was among the earliest of his visitors; another was the Attorney-General (now Lord Chancellor Plunkett); a third was the Commander of the Forces, Sir George Murray; and a fourth the Chief Remembrancer of Exchequer (the Right Honorable Anthony Blake), who was the bearer of a message from the Marquis Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, offering all sorts of facilities, and inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levee* in St. Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighborhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospi-

tality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had no more than himself counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society), than the demonstrations of respect which after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognized at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August, 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street, after inspecting the Castle of Dublin. Bailie * * * *, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised Return about his Glasgow Police, and observed to me, as he withdrew, that "*yon* was owre like worshipping the creature."

I may as well, perhaps, extract from a letter of the 16th, the contemporary note of one day's operations.

"Sir Humphry Davy is here on his way to fish in Connemara — he breakfasted at Walter's this morning; also Hartstonge, who was to show us the lions of St. Patrick's. Peveril was surprised to find the exterior of the cathedral so rudely worked, coarse, and almost shapeless — but the interior is imposing, and even grand. There are some curious old monuments of the Cork family, etc.; but one thinks of nothing but

Swift there — the whole cathedral is merely his tomb. Your papa hung long over the famous inscription,[1] which is in gilt letters upon black marble; and seemed vexed there was not a ladder at hand that he might have got nearer the bust (apparently a very fine one), by Roubiliac, which is placed over it. This was given by the piety of his printer, Faulkner. According to this, Swift had a prodigious double chin; and Peveril remarked that the severity of the whole countenance is much increased by the absence of the wig, which, in the prints, conceals the height and gloom of the brow, the uncommon massiveness and breadth of the temple-bones, and the Herculean style in which the head fits in to the neck behind. Stella's epitaph is on the adjoining pillar — close by. Sir Walter seemed not to have thought of it before (or to have forgotten, if he had), but to judge merely from the wording that Swift himself wrote it. She is described as 'Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this cathedral.' 'This,' said Sir Walter, 'the Dean might say — any one else would have said more.' She died in 1727 — Swift in 1745. Just by the entrance to the transept is his tablet in honor of the servant who behaved so well about the secret of the Drapier's Letters. — We then saw St. Sepulchre's Library, a monastic-looking place, very like one of the smaller college libraries in Oxford. Here they have the folio Clarendon, with Swift's marginal remarks, mostly in pencil, but still quite legible. 'Very savage as usual upon us poor Scots everywhere,' quoth the Unknown. — We then went into the Deanery (the one Swift inhabited has been pulled down), and had a most courteous and elegant reception from the Dean, the Honorable Dr. Ponsonby. He gave us a capital luncheon — the original full-length picture, of *the* Dean over the sideboard. The print in the Edinburgh edition is very good — but the complexion is in the picture, black, robust, sanguine — a heavy-lidded, stern blue eye. It was interesting to see how completely the *genius loci* has kept his ground. Various little relics reverently hoarded as they should be. They said his memory was as fresh as ever among the common people about

[1] The terrible inscription is "Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S. T. P., etc., ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit."

— they still sing his ballads, and had heard with great delight that Sir Walter wrote a grand book all about *the great Dane.* The

'Jolly lads of St. Patrick's, St. Keven's, Donore,'

mustered strong and stentorian at our exit. They would, like their great-grandfathers and mothers, have torn the Unknown to pieces, had he taken the other tack, and

'Insulted us all by insulting the Dean.'[1]

"We next saw the Bank, late Parliament House — the Dublin Society's Museum, where papa was enchanted with a perfect skeleton of the gigantic moose-deer, the horns fourteen feet from tip to tip, and high in proportion — and a long train of other fine places and queer things, all as per road-book. Everywhere throughout this busy day — fine folks within doors and rabble without — a terrible rushing and crushing to see the Baronet; Lord Wellington could not have excited a better rumpus. But the theatre in the evening completed the thing. I never heard such a row. The players might as well have had no tongues. Beatrice (Miss Foote) twice left the stage; and at last Benedick (Abbot, who is the manager) came forward, cunning dog, and asked what was the cause of the tempest. A thousand voices shouted, *Sir Walter Scott;* and the worthy lion being thus bearded and poked, rose, after an hour's torture, and said, with such a kindness and grace of tone and manner, *these* words: 'I am sure the Irish people — (a roar) — I am sure this respectable audience will not suppose that a stranger can be insensible to the kindness of their reception of him; and if I have been too long in saying this, I trust it will be attributed to the right cause — my unwillingness to take to myself honors so distinguished, and which I could not and cannot but feel to be unmerited.' I think these are the very words. The noise continued — a perfect cataract and thunder of roaring; but he would take no hints about going to the stage-box, and the evening closed decently enough. The theatre is very handsome — the dresses and scenery capital — the actors and actresses seemed (but, to be sure, this was scarcely a fair specimen) about as bad as in the days of Croker's Familiar Epistles."

[1] See Scott's *Swift* (Edition 1814), vol. x. p. 537.

On Monday, the 18th, to give another extract: —

"Young Mr. Maturin breakfasted, and Sir Walter asked a great deal about his late father and the present situation of the family, and promised to go and see the widow. When the young gentleman was gone, Hartstonge told us that Maturin used to compose with a wafer pasted on his forehead, which was the signal that if any of his family entered the *sanctum* they must not speak to him. 'He was never bred in a writer's *chaumer*,' quoth Peveril. Sir Walter observed that it seemed to be a piece of Protestantism in Dublin to drop the saintly titles of the Catholic Church; they call St. Patrick's, Patrick's; and St. Stephen's Green has been Orangeized into Stephen's. He said you might trace the Puritans in the plain *Powles* (for St. Paul's) of the old English comedians. We then went to the Bank, where the Governor and Directors had begged him to let *themselves* show him everything in proper style; and he was forced to say, as he came out, 'These people treated me as if I was a Prince of the Blood.' I do believe that, just at this time, the Duke of York might be treated as well — better he could not be. From this to the College hard by. The Provost received Sir W. in a splendid drawing-room, and then carried him through the libraries, halls, etc., amidst a crowd of eager students. He received his diploma in due form, and there followed a superb *déjeuner* in the Provostry. Neither Oxford nor Cambridge could have done the whole thing in better style. Made acquaintance with Dr. Brinkley, Astronomer Royal, and Dr. Macdonnell, Professor of Greek, and all the rest of the leading Professors, who vied with each other in respect and devotion to the Unknown. — 19th. I forgot to say that there is one *true* paragraph in the papers. One of the College librarians yesterday told Sir W., fishingly, 'I have been so busy that I have not yet read *your* Redgauntlet.' He answered, very meekly, 'I have not happened to fall in with such a work, Doctor.'"

From Dublin we made an excursion of some days into the county Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Mr. Crampton,[1] who struck Sir

[1] Now Sir Philip Crampton, Baronet. — (1839.)

Walter as being more like Sir Humphry Davy than any man he had met, not in person only, but in the liveliness and range of his talk, and who kindly did the honors of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, Lord Plunkett's seat near Bray. Here there was a large and brilliant party assembled; and from hence, under the guidance of the Attorney-General and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil's Glyn, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St. Kevin's Bed* — the scene of the fate of Kathleen, celebrated in Moore's ballad, —

> "By that lake whose gloomy shore
> Skylark never warbles o'er," etc.

"It is," says my letter, "a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when your papa, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. He succeeded and got in — the first lame man that ever tried it. After he was gone, Mr. Plunkett told the female guide he was a poet. Kathleen treated this with indignation, as a quiz of Mr. Attorney's. '*Poet!*' said she; 'the devil a bit of him — but an honorable gentleman: he gave me half-a-crown.'"

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs. Scott,[1] and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally grati-

[1] [Miss Edgeworth's first impressions of the young pair are that "Sir Walter's eldest son is excessively shy, very handsome, not at all literary, but he has sense and honorable principle" (August, 1823); while "Mrs. Scott is perfectly unaffected, and rather pretty, with a sweet confiding expression of countenance, and fine mild most loving eyes" (August, 1825). — *Maria Edgeworth's Life and Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 464, 479.]

fied both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest; while her brother, Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favored district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics, — the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognizing some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

"Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;"

and, in particular, we had "the playful children just let loose from school" in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a play-ground of his lawn; and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough

coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown; and Pallasmore (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the little hamlet where the author of the Vicar of Wakefield first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle, I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with preëminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honors. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit — one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some

words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected Poets and Novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said, — "I fear you have some very young ideas in your head: — are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature — to disbelieve that anybody can be worth much care who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor world this would be if that were the true doctrine! I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbors, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart." Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes — her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched; — (for, as Pope says, "the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest;") — but she brushed them gayly aside, and said, "You see how it is — Dean Swift said he had written his books in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord; Sir Walter writes his in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which, later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say

of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it — it was *vulgar*. "My love," said her father, "you speak like a very young lady; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* 'T is only *common;* nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."

At Edgeworthstown he received the following letter from Mr. Canning: —

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART., ETC., ETC.

COMBE WOOD, July 24, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR, — A pretty severe indisposition has prevented me from sooner acknowledging your kind letter; and now I fear that I shall not be able to accomplish my visit to Scotland this year. Although I shall be, for the last fortnight of August, at no great distance from the Borders, my time is so limited that I cannot reckon upon getting farther.

I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for, though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman) have so well known the value of the honor which you are paying to them.

By the way, if you landed at Liverpool on your return, could you find a better road to the north than through the Lake country? You would find me (from about the 10th of August) and Charles Ellis [1] at my friend Mr. Bolton's, on the banks of Windermere, where I can promise you as kind, though not so noisy a welcome, as that which you have just experienced; and where our friend the Professor (who is Admiral of the Lake) would fit out all his flotilla, and fire as many of his guns as are not painted ones, in honor of your arrival. — Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely, GEO. CANNING.

This invitation was not to be resisted; and the following letter announced a change of the original route: —

[1] Now Lord Seaford.

TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT, ESQ., ROKEBY PARK.

EDGEWORTHSTOWN, August 3, 1825.

Your kind letter, my dear Morritt, finds me sweltering under the hottest weather I ever experienced, for the sake of seeing sights — of itself, you know, the most feverish occupation in the world. Luckily we are free of Dublin, and there is nothing around us but green fields and fine trees, "barring the high roads," which make those who tread on them the most complete *pie-poudreux* ever seen; that is, if the old definition of *pie-poudres* be authentic, and if not, you may seek another dusty simile for yourself — it cannot exceed the reality. I have with me Lockhart and Anne, Walter and his *cara sposa*, for all whom the hospitality of Edgeworthstown has found ample space and verge enough. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive the extent of this virtue in all classes; I don't think even our Scottish hospitality can match that of Ireland. Everything seems to give way to the desire to accommodate a stranger; and I really believe the story of the Irish harper, who condemned his harp to the flames for want of fire-wood to cook a guest's supper. Their personal kindness to me has been so great, that were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play, that I had been *kept back*, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect. As I am LL. D. of Trinity College, and am qualified as a Catholic seer, by having mounted up into the bed of Saint Kevin, at the celebrated seven churches of Glendalough, I am entitled to prescribe, *ex cathedrâ*, for all the diseases of Ireland, as being free both of the Catholic and Protestant parties. But the truth is, that Pat, while the doctors were consulting, has been gradually and securely recovering of himself. He is very loath to admit this, indeed; there being a strain of hypochondria in his complaints, which

will not permit him to believe he 's getting better. Nay, he gets even angry when a physician, more blunt than polite, continues to assure him that he is better than he supposes himself, and that much of his present distress consists, partly of the recollection of former indisposition, partly of the severe practice of modern empirics.

In sober sadness, to talk of the misery of Ireland at this time is to speak of the illness of a *malade imaginaire*. *Well* she is not, but she is rapidly becoming so. There are all the outward and visible tokens of convalescence. Everything is mending; the houses that arise are better a hundred-fold than the cabins which are falling; the peasants of the younger class are dressed a great deal better than with the rags which clothe the persons of the more ancient Teagues, which realize the wardrobe of Jenny Sutton, of whom Morris sweetly sings, —

> "One single pin at night let loose
> The robes which veiled her beauty."

I am sure I have seen with apprehension a single button perform the same feat, and when this mad scarecrow hath girded up his loins to run hastily by the side of the chaise, I have feared it would give way, and that there, as King Lear's fool says, we should be all shamed. But this, which seems once to have generally been the attire of the fair of the Green Isle, probably since the time of King Malachi and the collar of gold, is now fast disappearing, and the habit of the more youthful Pats and Patesses is decent and comely. *Here* they all look well colored, and well fed, and well contented. And as I see in most places great exertions making to reclaim bogs upon a large scale, and generally to improve ground, I must needs hold that they are in constant employment.

With all this, there is much that remains to be amended, and which time and increase of capital only can amend. The price of labor is far too low, and this naturally reduces the laboring poor beyond their just level in society. The behavior of the gentry in general

to the laborers is systematically harsh, and this arrogance is received with a servile deference which argues anything excepting affection. This, however, is also in the course of amending. I have heard a great deal of the far-famed Catholic Question from both sides, and I think I see its bearings better than I did; but these are for your ear when we meet — as meet we shall — if no accident prevent it. I return *via* Holyhead, as I wish to show Anne something of England, and you may believe that we shall take Rokeby in our way. To-morrow I go to Killarney, which will occupy most part of the week. About Saturday I shall be back at Dublin to take leave of friends; and then for England, ho! I will, avoiding London, seek a pleasant route to Rokeby. Fate will only allow us to rest there for a day or two, because I have some desire to see Canning, who is to be on the Lakes about that time. *Et finis*, — my leave will be exhausted. Anne and Lockhart send kindest compliments to you and the ladies. I am truly rejoiced that Mrs. John Morritt is better. Indeed, I had learned that agreeable intelligence from Lady Louisa Stuart. I found Walter and his wife living happily and rationally, affectionately and prudently. There is great good sense and quietness about all Jane's domestic arrangements, and she plays the leaguer's lady very prettily. — I will write again when I reach Britain, and remain ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney;[1] but posting

[1] [The party was three days at Killarney (August 5–8). Macaulay, while on a visit there in 1849, records in his diary that "one of the boatmen gloried in having rowed Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth, twenty-four years ago. It was, he said, a compensation to him for having missed a hanging which took place that very day." — *Macaulay's Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 229.]

was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected — and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route — of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting-place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of champagne. But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of Pari-Banou's tent. They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lioness, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighborhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gayety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts — with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe, truly delightful in all respects. But those of the party to whom the South of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on. But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and

repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service; — the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every wayside, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive; — and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of Old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things; but twelve years can have made but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilization, sicken the heart of the stranger by such widespread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism; and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions — such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met everywhere on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire — served only to make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and appalling. Taking his bedroom candle, one night in a village on the Duke's estate, Sir Walter summed up the strain of his discourse by a line of Shakespeare's, —

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."

There were, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom; and no traveller ever tasted either

the humors or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells, in honor of the advent, there was ushered in a brother-poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of Marmion. He was a scarecrow figure — attired much in the fashion of the *strugglers* — by name O'Kelly; and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram: —

> "Three poets, of three different nations born,
> The United Kingdom in this age adorn;
> Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
> And Erin's pride — O'Kelly, great and good."

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming; and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe), this pregnant couplet, —

> "Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
> Are characters whose fame not soon will cease."

We were still more amused (though there was real misery in the case) with what befell on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities not usually shown to travellers. A gentleman, whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate, with a whiskey-bottle on a deal-table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in

this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our cicerone left his card for the widow — having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house, he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory, it was in these terms: —

"Mrs. —— presents her kind compliments to Mr. ——, and much regrets that she cannot show the pictures to-day, as Major —— died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs. —— the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honor to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth."

Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history, said, "Let me see, sirs; first we lost our wee callant — and then Jenny — and then the gudeman himsel died — and then the *coo* died, too, poor hizzey; but, to be sure, *her* hide brought me fifteen shillings."

At one county gentleman's table where we dined, though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company — about as many Catholics as Protestants, all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner, however, punch was called for; tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whiskey — the one bearing on its label KING'S, the other QUEEN'S. We did not at first understand these inscriptions; but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty, the Queen's was of contraband origin; and, in the choice of the liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle — the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we

considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood; whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order; but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility, which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered — (for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time) — in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept staghounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we were told, because he considered it as a notorious fact, that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however; for, though no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion that no good could come of farther resistance to the claim in question. He on all occasions expressed manfully his belief, that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigor for another half century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favor of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland entertained views and sentiments

very likely to confirm these impressions; and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near; and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time. The polished amenity of the Lord-Lieutenant set off his commanding range of thought and dexterous exposition of facts to the most captivating advantage. "The Marquis's talk," says Scott, in a letter of the following year, "gave me the notion of the kind of statesmanship that one might have expected in a Roman emperor, accustomed to keep the whole world in his view, and to divide his hours between ministers like Mecænas and wits like Horace." The acute logic and brilliant eloquence of Lord Plunkett he ever afterwards talked of with high admiration; nor had he, he said, encountered in society any combination of qualities more remarkable than the deep sagacity and the broad, rich humor of Mr. Blake. In Plunkett, Blake, and Crampton, he considered himself as having gained three real friends by this expedition; and I think I may venture to say that the feeling on their side was warmly reciprocal.

If he had been made aware at the time of the discourtesy of the Romish stag-hunter at Killarney, he might have been consoled by a letter which reached him that same week from a less bigoted member of the same church — the great poet of Ireland — whom he had never chanced to meet in society but once, and that at an early period of life, shortly after the first publication of The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART., ETC., ETC.

SLOPERTON COTTAGE, DEVIZES, July 24, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR WALTER, — I wish most heartily that I had been in my own green land to welcome you. It delights me, however, to see (what I could not have doubted) that the warm hearts of my countrymen have shown that they know how to

value you. How I envy those who will have the glory of showing you and Killarney to each other! No two of nature's productions, I *will* say, were ever more worthy of meeting. If the Kenmares should be your ciceroni, pray tell them what I say of their Paradise, with my best regards and greetings. I received your kind message, through Newton,[1] last year, that "if I did not come and see you, before you died, you would appear to me afterwards." Be assured that, as I am all for living apparitions, I shall take care and have the start of you, and would have done it this very year, I rather think, only for your Irish movements.

Present my best regards to your son-in-law, and believe me, my dear Sir Walter (though we have met, I am sorry to say, but once in our lives), yours cordially and sincerely,

THOMAS MOORE.

Scott's answer was: —

TO THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

SOMERTON, near Templeton (I think), August 5.

MY DEAR SIR, — If anything could have added to the pleasure I must necessarily feel at the warm reception which the Irish nation have honored me with, or if anything could abate my own sense that I am noways worth the coil that has been made about me, it must be the assurance that you partake and approve of the feelings of your kind-hearted country-folks.

In Ireland I have met with everything that was kind, and have seen much which is never to be forgotten. What I have seen has, in general, given me great pleasure; for it appears to me that the adverse circumstances which have so long withered the prosperity of this rich and powerful country are losing their force, and that a gradual but steady spirit of progressive improvement is effectually, though tacitly, counteracting their bad effects. The next twenty-five years will probably be the most important in their results that Ireland ever knew. So

[1] The late amiable and elegant artist, Gilbert Stewart Newton, R. A., had spent part of the autumn of 1824 at Chiefswood.

prophesies a sharp-sighted Sennachie from the land of mist and snow, aware that, though his opinion may be unfounded, he cannot please your ear better than by presaging the prosperity of Ireland.

And so, to descend from such high matters, I hope you will consider me as having left my card for you by this visit, although I have not been happy enough to find you at home. You are bound by the ordinary forms of society to return the call, and come to see Scotland. Bring wife and bairns. We have plenty of room, and plenty of oatmeal, and, *entre nous*, a bottle or two of good claret, to which I think you have as little objection as I have. We will talk of poor Byron, who was dear to us both, and regret that such a rose should have fallen from the chaplet of his country so untimely. I very often think of him almost with tears. Surely you, who have the means, should do something for his literary life at least. You might easily avoid tearing open old wounds. Then, returning to our proposed meeting, you know folks call me a Jacobite, and you a Jacobin; so it is quite clear that we agree to a T. Having uttered this vile pun, which is only pardonable because the subject of politics deserves no better, it is high time to conclude.

I return through England, yet, I am afraid, with little chance of seeing you, which I should wish to do, were it but for half an hour. I have come thus far on my way to Killarney, where Hallam is lying with a broken leg. So much for middle-aged gentlemen climbing precipices. I, who have been regularly inducted into the bed of Saint Kevin at the Seven Churches, trust I shall bear charmed limbs upon this occasion. — I am very much, dear sir, your obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT.

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception — corporation honors, deputations of the literary and scientific societies,

and so forth — awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Lee; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful picnic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte*: —

> "The stone this is, whoever kisses,
> He never misses to grow eloquent —
> 'T is he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
> Or be a member of Parliament."

But the shamefacedness of our young female friends was not exposed to an inspection of the works of art, celebrated by the poetical Dean of Cork as the prime ornaments of Lady Jefferies's "station," —

> "The statues growing that noble place in,
> Of heathen goddesses most rare —
> Homer, Venus, and Nebuchadnezzar,
> All standing naked in the open air."

These had disappeared, and the castle and all its appurtenances were in a state of woeful dilapidation and neglect.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross — at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned — to our old quarters in St. Stephen's Green; [1]

[1] [Mrs. Edgeworth records: "The evening of the day they left Killarney, Sir Walter was unwell, and Maria was much struck by the tender affectionate attention of his son and Mr. Lockhart, and their great anxiety; he was quite as usual, however, the next day, and, on their arrival in Dublin, the whole party dined at Captain Scott's house in Stephen's Green; he and Mrs. Scott most hospitably inviting, besides Maria and Harriet, my daughters Fanny and Mrs. Barry Fox, who had just returned from Italy, and my two sons, who were coming home for the holidays. It happened to be Sir Walter's birthday, and his health was drunk with more feeling than gayety. He and Maria that evening bade farewell to each other, never to meet again in this world." — *Maria Edgeworth's Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 481.

In her latest novel, *Helen*, published after Scott's death, Miss Edgeworth pays a warm and heartfelt tribute to her friend and his works, clos-

and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing, to add one more to the long list of the

ing with this description: "If you have seen Raeburn's admirable pictures, or Chantrey's speaking bust, you have as complete an idea of Walter Scott as painting or sculpture can give. The first impression of his appearance and manner was surprising to me, I recollect, from its quiet, unpretending good-nature; but scarcely had that impression been made, before I was struck with something of the chivalrous courtesy of other times. In his conversation you would have found all that is most delightful in his works — the combined talents and knowledge of the historian, novelist, antiquary, and poet. He recited poetry admirably, his whole face and figure kindling as he spoke; but whether talking, reading, or reciting, he never tired me, even with admiring. And it is curious that, in conversing with him, I frequently found myself forgetting that I was speaking with Sir Walter Scott; and, what is even more extraordinary, forgetting that Sir Walter Scott was speaking to me, till I was awakened to the conviction by his saying something which no one else could have said. Altogether, he was certainly the most perfectly agreeable and perfectly amiable great man I ever knew."

To the end of her life, Miss Edgeworth's admiration for Scott remained an ever living feeling. A slight but significant evidence of this is given in a letter written to Dr. Holland, in her eighty-third year, and only a few months before her death, to express her admiration of the first volumes of Macaulay's *History*, — "an admiration," she says, "quite uninfluenced by the self-satisfaction, vanity, pride, surprise, I had in finding my name in a note!! . . . Moreover, there was a mixture of shame, and a twinge of pain, with the pleasure and the pride I felt in having a line given to *me*, when there is no mention of Sir Walter Scott throughout the work, even in places where it seems impossible that the historian could resist paying the becoming tribute which genius owes and loves to pay to genius." — *Macaulay's Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 206.]

illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

ELLERAY, August 24.

. . . "We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carig, which Sir. W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crags; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies' — namely, Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honorable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, forswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honored virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighborhood; for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance.[1] We proceeded up the hill, and found everything about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently seventy, the other sixty-five, dressed in heavy blue riding-habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the

[1] It is, I suppose, needless to say that the editor is far from vouching for the accuracy of these details. The letter in the text gives the gossip as it was heard at the time.

agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, etc., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders* — several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K. C. B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the *ci-devant* groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, *bijouterie*, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue — the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets) *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it — and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking, simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance (*i. e.*, absurd innocence of character) one must have looked for; but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockingism again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them." [1]

[1] [Some objection seems to have been made to this lively description, for Lockhart writes to Mrs. Hughes after the publication of the last volumes of the *Life:* "Was I not to give one sketch of blue-stockingism in the life of a man who suffered so much under it? and could I have found the weed in such efflorescence elsewhere?" — *Quarterly Review*, vol. cxvi. p. 472.]

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr. Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake; and thither Mr. Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honor of the Minister — it included already Mr. Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honored and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honor the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars,

made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us,[1] and passing over

[1] [Lockhart writes to Mrs. Lockhart, August 25: "Tuesday morning [we all,] Sir W., Anne, and Wordsworth, and Wilson attending on horseback, went to Rydal Mount to breakfast. . . . The Professor, who had not been in W.'s house for six years, made up for his lost time by eating a breakfast which absolutely thunderstruck the Stamp-master and all the strangers that were within his gates. He and young Wordsworth went to Coniston to a regatta; and we, with Wordsworth and his daughter, went to Keswick, — he spouting his own verses very grandly all the way. It was a fine sunshiny day, only too hot, and we certainly saw and heard many fine things. This I remark once for all, that during all these rides, etc., the Unknown was continually quoting Wordsworth's poetry and Wordsworth ditto, but that the great Laker never uttered one syllable by which it might have been intimated to a stranger that your Papa had ever written a line either of prose or verse since he was born. . . .

"We found Southey rather pale and sickly in looks; . . . but his eyes are bright, and the folios and the portfolios of beautiful MS. open before him as usual, in the midst of all the ladies. Mrs. Coleridge, a pleasing person, and has been pretty; ditto, ditto, Mrs. Laureate, and all very neat and prettily dressed. . . . Miss Southey is a tall, strapping, and comely lass, and some of the younger sisters promise to be very beautiful; but the cousin, Miss Coleridge, is really a lovely vision of a creature, with the finest blue eyes I ever saw, and altogether, face and figure and manner, the very ideal of a novel heroine. They say she is very clever and accomplished. We could see nothing except extreme ignorance of the world. She talked to Anne, as if she were sure she had found a congenial spirit, about books, bards, and 'the literary females of Edinburgh.' Southey was very civil. . . .

"Yesterday, being Wednesday, Wordsworth joined us again at seven A. M., and we came over Kirkstone to Patterdale, Mr. Quillinan driving Mary in a gig, and Dora riding in our rear. The same sort of talk; poor old Crabbe would have been worried clean outright had the Unknown not been there to quote *Sir Eustace Grey*, and to say sensible and true things in his favor. Both right as usual in disputes with men of sense. Wordsworth says Crabbe is always an addition to our classical literature, whether he be

Kirkstone to Ullswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir Walter reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

I add two letters on the subject of this Irish expedition: —

TO J. B. S. MORRITT, ESQ., ROKEBY PARK, GRETA BRIDGE.

ABBOTSFORD, September 2, 1825.

Your letter, my dear Morritt, gave me most sincere pleasure on your account, and also on my own, as it reconciled me to myself for my stupidity in misdirecting my letters to Charlotte and you from Wales. I was sincerely vexed when I found out my *bevue*, but am now well pleased that it happened, since we might otherwise

or be not a poet. He attributes his want of popularity to a want of flow of feeling, — a general dryness and knottiness of style and matter which it does not soothe the mind to dwell upon; Scott, to the painful truth of his pictures of human life, especially for the lower order of society, who cannot butter their bread and sigh over the description of a crust. Wordsworth quoted some lines in which Crabbe sums up the object of his writings as being to convince the high that they are only worms and dust like the poor, the poor that, miserable as they are, they shall one day have the Lords of the Earth for their bedfellows in the dust; and, to be sure, this is a rather anti-poetic result to aspire to. By the bye, is not it odd what a total want of religion there is in all the writings of the political parson? I mean all religious feeling." — *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 341–343.]

have arrived at Rokeby at a time when we must necessarily have been a little in the way. I wish you joy most sincerely of your nephew's settling in life, in a manner so agreeably to your wishes and views. *Bella gerant alii* — he will have seen enough of the world abroad to qualify him fully to estimate and discharge the duties of an English country-gentleman; and with your example before him, and your advice to resort to, he cannot, with the talents he possesses, fail to fill honorably that most honorable and important rank in society. You will, probably, in due time, think of Parliament for him, where there is a fine sphere for young men of talents at present, all the old political post-horses being, as Sir Pertinax says, dry-foundered.

I was extremely sorry to find Canning at Windermere looking poorly; but, in a ride, the old man seemed to come alive again. I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see everything with his own eyes, whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements. His is a valuable life to us just now. — I passed a couple of days at Lowther, to make up in some degree to Anne for her disappointment in not getting to Rokeby. I was seduced there by Lady Frederick Bentinck, whom I had long known as a very agreeable person, and who was very kind to Anne. This wore out my proposed leisure; and from Lowther we reached Abbotsford in one day, and now doth the old *bore* feed in the old frank.[1] I had the great pleasure of leaving Walter and his little wife well, happy, and, as they seem perfectly to understand each other, likely to continue so. His ardor for military affairs continues unabated, and his great scene of activity is the *fifteen acres* — so the Irish denominate the exercising

[1] *2d King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene 3.

ground, consisting of about fifty acres, in the Phœnix Park, which induced an attorney, writing a challenge to a brother of the trade, to name, as a place of meeting, the *fifteen acres*, adding, with professional accuracy, "be they more or less." Here, about 3000 men, the garrison of Dublin, are to be seen exercising, ever and anon, in order that Pat may be aware how some 2400 muskets, assisted by the discharge of twenty field-pieces, and the tramp of 500 or 600 horse, sound in comparison to the thunder of Mr. O'Connell.

All this travelling and wooing is like to prevent our meeting this season. I hope to make up for it the next. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia, join Lockhart and me in best wishes to the happy two who are to be soon one. My best respects attend the Miss Morritts, — and I ever am, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.

TO MISS JOANNA BAILLIE, HAMPSTEAD.

ABBOTSFORD, October 12, 1825.

It did not require your kind letter of undeserved remembrance, my dear friend, to remind me that I had been guilty of very criminal negligence in our epistolary correspondence. How this has come to pass I really do not know; but it arises out of any source but that of ingratitude to my friends, or thoughtless forgetfulness of my duty to them. On the contrary, I think always most of them to whom I do owe letters, for when my conscience is satisfied on that subject, their perturbed spirits remain at rest, or at least do not haunt me as the injured spirits do the surviving murderers.

I well intended to have written from Ireland, but, alas, hell, as some stern old divine says, is paved with good intentions. There was such a whirl of visiting, and laking, and boating, and wondering, and shouting, and laughing, and carousing; so much to be seen and so little time to see it; so much to be heard, and only two ears to listen to twenty voices, that, upon the whole, I

grew desperate, and gave up all thoughts of doing what was right and proper upon post-days — and so all my epistolary good intentions are gone to Macadamize, I suppose, "the burning marle" of the infernal regions. I have not the pen of our friend Maria Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education, considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to Education in Natural Philosophy, or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2*s.* 6*d.* per day. In a waste country, like some parts of America, it may do very well, or perhaps for a sailor or a traveller, certainly for a civil engineer. But in the ordinary professions of the better-informed orders I have always observed that a small taste for mechanics tends to encouraging a sort of trifling self-conceit, founded on knowing that which is not worth being known by one who has other matters to employ his mind on, and, in short, forms a trumpery gimcrack kind of a character, who is a mechanic among gentlemen, and most probably a gentleman among mechanics. You must understand I mean only to challenge the system as making mechanics too much and too general a subject of education, and converting scholars into makers of toys. Men like Watt, or whose genius tends strongly to invent and execute those wonderful combinations which extend in such an incalculable degree the human force and command over the physical world, do not come within ordinary rules; but your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar, and your Lucy of most common occurrence will be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood, and cutting their fingers, which I am

convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.

Well, but I did not mean to say anything about Harry and Lucy, whose dialogues are very interesting after all, but about Ireland, which I could prophesy for as well as if I were Thomas the Rhymer. Her natural gifts are so great, that, despite all the disadvantages which have hitherto retarded her progress, she will, I believe, be queen of the trefoil of kingdoms. I never saw a richer country, or, to speak my mind, a finer people; the worst of them is the bitter and envenomed dislike which they have to each other. Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead. This, however, is getting better, for, as the government temporizes between the parties, and does not throw, as formerly, its whole weight into the Protestant scale, there is more appearance of things settling into concord and good order. The Protestants of the old school, the determined Orangemen, are a very fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of a country; they reminded me of the Spaniard in Mexico, and seemed still to walk among the Catholics with all the pride of the conquerors of the Boyne and the captors of Limerick. Their own belief is completely fixed, that there are enough of men in Down and Antrim to conquer all Ireland again; and when one considers the habitual authority they have exercised, their energetic and military character, and the singular way in which they are banded and united together, they may be right enough for what I know, for they have all one mind and one way of pursuing it. But the Catholic is holding up his head now in a different way from what they did in former days, though still with a touch of the savage about them. It is, after all, a helpless sort of superstition, which with its saints' days, and the influence of its ignorant bigoted priesthood, destroys ambition and industrious exertion.

It is rare to see the Catholic rise above the line he is born in. The Protestant part of the country is as highly improved as many parts of England. Education is much more frequent in Ireland than England. In Kerry, one of the wildest counties, you find peasants who speak Latin. It is not the art of reading, however, but the use which is made of it, that is to be considered. It is much to be wished that the priests themselves were better educated, — but the College at Maynooth has been a failure. The students, all men of the lower orders, are educated there in all the bigotry of the Catholic religion, unmitigated by any of the knowledge of the world which they used to acquire in France, Italy, or Spain, from which they returned very often highly accomplished and companionable men. I do not believe either party care a bit for what is called Emancipation, only that the Catholics desire it because the Protestants are not willing they should have it, and the Protestants desire to withhold it, because the want of it mortifies the Catholics. The best-informed Catholics said it had no interest for the common people, whose distresses had nothing to do with political Emancipation, but that they, the higher order, were interested in it as a point of honor, the withholding of which prevented their throwing their strength into the hands of Government. On the whole, I think Government have given the Catholics so much, that withholding this is just giving them something to grumble about, without its operating to diminish, in a single instance, the extent of Popery. — Then we had beautiful lakes, "those vast inland seas," as Spenser terms them, and hills which they call mountains, and dargles and dingles, and most superb ruins of castles and abbeys, and live nuns in strict retreat, not permitted to speak, but who read their breviaries with one eye, and looked at their visitors with the other. Then we had Miss Edgeworth, and the kind-natured, clever Harriet, who moved, and thought, and acted for everybody's comfort rather than

her own; we had Lockhart to say clever things — and Walter, with his whiskers, to overawe obstinate postilions and impudent beggars — and Jane to bless herself that the folks had neither houses, clothes, nor furniture — and Anne to make fun from morning to night, —

"And merry folks were we."

John Richardson has been looking at a wild domain within five miles of us, and left us in the earnest determination to buy it, having caught a basket of trouts in the space of two hours in the stream he is to call his own. It is a good purchase, I think; he has promised to see me again, and carry you up a bottle of whiskey, which, if you will but take enough of, will operate as a peace-offering should, and make you forget all my epistolary failures. I beg kind respects to dear Mrs. Agnes and to Mrs. Baillie. Lady Scott and Anne send best respects. — I have but room to say that I am always yours,

Walter Scott.

CHAPTER LXIV

LIFE OF NAPOLEON IN PROGRESS. — VISITS OF MR. MOORE, MRS. COUTTS, ETC. — COMMERCIAL MANIA AND IMPENDING DIFFICULTIES

1825

WITHOUT an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford — the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers — or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water, or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the Life of Napoleon was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while "the great magician," in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself, and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly, enjoying rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which have peopled all our firesides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakespeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

ABBOTSFORD, THE LIBRARY

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read even then, his correspondence may have afforded some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, *never to be doing nothing*. He had no "unconsidered trifles" of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything — except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours nowadays, with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the Reviews and Magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum; but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of years had begun to plant some specks before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when (in Shortreed's phrase) "he was making himself." It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily

and gayly along a fast-blackening page of The Talisman. It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities, a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida. To observe this was the more painful, because I had at that time to consult him about some literary proposals, the closing with which would render it necessary for me to abandon my profession and residence in Edinburgh, and with them the hope of being able to relieve him of some part of the minor labors in which he was now involved — an assistance on which he had counted when he undertook this historical task. There were then about me, indeed, cares and anxieties of various sorts, that might have thrown a shade even over a brighter vision of his interior. For the circumstance that finally determined me, and reconciled him as to the proposed alteration in my views of life, was the failing health of an infant equally dear to us both. It was, in a word, the opinion of our medical friends, that the short-lived child of many and high hopes, whose name will go down to posterity with one of Sir Walter's most precious works, could hardly survive another northern winter; and we all flattered ourselves with the anticipation that my removal to London at the close of 1825 might pave the way for a happy resumption of the cottage at Chiefswood in the ensuing summer. *Dis aliter visum.*

During the latter months of 1825, while the matter to which I have alluded was yet undecided, I had to make two hurried journeys to London, by which I lost the opportunity of witnessing Sir Walter's reception of several eminent persons with whom he then formed or ratified a friendship; — among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady — who spent some days at Abbotsford, and detected nothing of the less agreeable features in its existence, which I

have been dwelling upon; Dr. Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter; and also the brother bard, who had expressed his regret at not being present "when Scott and Killarney were introduced to each other." No more welcome announcement ever reached Scott than Mr. Moore's of his purpose to make out, that same season, his long meditated expedition to Scotland; and the characteristic opening and close of the reply will not, I hope, be thrown away upon my reader, any more than they were on the warm-hearted minstrel of Erin.

TO THOMAS MOORE, ESQ., SLOPERTON COTTAGE, DEVIZES.

ABBOTSFORD, Thursday.

MY DEAR SIR, — Damn Sir — My dear Moore, — Few things could give me more pleasure than your realizing the prospect your letter holds out to me. We are at Abbotsford fixtures till 10th November, when my official duty, for I am "slave to an hour and vassal to a bell,"[1] calls me to Edinburgh. I hope you will give me as much of your time as you can — no one will value it more highly.

You keep the great north road till you come to the last stage in England, Cornhill, and then take up the Tweed to Kelso. If I knew what day you would be at Kelso, I would come down and do the honors of Tweedside, by bringing you here, and showing you anything that is remarkable by the way; but though I could start at a moment's warning, I should scarce, I fear, have time to receive a note from Newcastle soon enough to admit of my reaching you at Kelso. Drop me a line, however, at all events; and, in coming from Kelso to Melrose and Abbotsford, be sure to keep the southern side of the Tweed, both because it is far the pleasantest route, and because I will come a few miles to take the chance of meeting you. You do not mention whether you have any fellow-travellers. We have plenty of accommodation for

[1] *Oldham's Satires* — See Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xi. p. 101.

any part of your family, or any friend, who may be with you. — Yours, in great joy and expectation,

WALTER SCOTT.

Mr. Moore arrived accordingly — and he remained several days. Though not, I believe, a regular journalizer, he kept a brief diary during his Scotch tour, and he has kindly allowed me the use of it.[1] He fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose — no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott — and no company at dinner except the Fergusons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation; and from the hour they met, they seemed to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honorable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron — from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr. Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of ballad-hunting, Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the Poems; and "at last," says he, "to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise," etc., etc.: he concluded with saying, "They have been a mine of wealth to me — but I find I fail in them now — I can no longer make them so good as at first." This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, "he laid his hand," says

[1] [The publication of Moore's *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, in 1853, proved the poet to have been above most men a regular journalizer. The entries in his diary from October 29 to November 2, 1825, form a brief record of his Abbotsford experiences, from which Lockhart has taken the most interesting passages.]

Mr. Moore, "with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said — *Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*" They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. "Hardly a Magazine is now published," said Moore, "that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation." — Scott turned with his look of shrewd humor, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, "Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows;" but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, "we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons." — "In complete novelty," says Moore, "he seemed to think, lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days."

Mr. Moore was not less pleased than Washington Irving had been nine years before with Scott's good friend at Kaeside. He says: —

"Our walk was to the cottage of Mr. Laidlaw, his bailiff, a gentleman who had been reduced beneath his due level in life, and of whom Scott spoke with the most cordial respect. His intention was, he said, to ask him to come down and dine with us: the cottage homely, but the man himself, with his broad Scotch dialect, showing all the quiet self-possession of good breeding and good sense."

At Melrose, writes Mr. Moore: —

"With the assistance of the sexton, a shrewd, sturdy-mannered original, he explained to me all the parts of the ruin; after which we were shown up to a room in the sexton's house, filled with casts done by himself, from the ornaments, heads, etc., of the Abbey. Seeing a large niche empty, Scott said, 'Johnny, I 'll give you a Virgin and Child to put in that place.' Never did I see a happier face than Johnny's at this news — it was all over smiles. 'But, Johnny,' continued Scott, as we went downstairs, 'I 'm afraid, if there should be another anti-popish rising, you 'll have your house pulled about your

ears.' When we had got into the carriage, I said, 'You have made that man most truly happy.' — 'Ecod, then,' he replied, 'there are two of us pleased, for I was very much puzzled to know what to do with that Virgin and Child; and mamma particularly' (meaning Lady Scott) 'will be delighted to get rid of it.' A less natural man would have allowed me to remain under the impression that he had really done a very generous thing."

They called the same morning at Huntly Burn: —

"I could not help thinking," says Moore, "during this homely visit, how astonished some of those French friends of mine would be, among whom the name of Sir Walter Scott is encircled only with high and romantic associations, to see the quiet, neighborly manner in which he took his seat beside these good old maids, and the familiar ease with which they treated him in return. No common squire indeed, with but half an idea in his head, could have fallen into the gossip of a humdrum country visit with more unassumed simplicity."

Mr. Moore would have been likely to make the same sort of observation had he accompanied Sir Walter into any other house in the valley; but he could not be expected to appreciate off-hand the very uncommon intellectual merits of those "old maids" of Huntly Burn — who had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of living from youth to age in the atmosphere of genius, learning, good sense, and high principle.

He was of course delighted at the dinner which followed, when Scott had collected his neighbors to enjoy his guest, with the wit and humor of Sir Adam Ferguson, his picturesque stories of the Peninsula, and his inimitable singing of the old Jacobite ditties.

"Nothing," he writes, "could be more hearty and radiant than Scott's enjoyment of them, though his attempts to join in the chorus showed certainly far more of will than of power. He confessed that he hardly knew high from low in music. I told him that Lord Byron, in the same manner, knew nothing of music as an art, but still had a strong feeling of it, and that

I had more than once seen the tears come into his eyes as he listened. 'I dare say,' said Scott, 'that Byron's feeling and mine about music might be pretty much the same.' — I was much struck by his description of a scene he had once with Lady * * * * (the divorced Lady * * * *) upon her eldest boy, who had been born before her marriage with Lord * * * *, asking her why he himself was not Lord * * * * (the second title). 'Do you hear that?' she exclaimed wildly to Scott; and then rushing to the pianoforte, played, in a sort of frenzy, some hurried airs, as if to drive away the dark thoughts then in her mind. It struck me that he spoke of this lady as if there had been something more than mere friendship between them. He described her as beautiful and full of character.

"In reference to his own ignorance of musical matters, Scott mentioned that he had been once employed as counsel upon a case where a purchaser of a fiddle had been imposed upon as to its value. He found it necessary, accordingly, to prepare himself by reading all about fiddles and fiddlers that he could find in the Encyclopædia, etc.; and having got the names of Stradivarius, Amati, and such like, glibly upon his tongue, he got swimmingly through his cause. Not long after this, dining at [the Duke of Hamilton's], he found himself left alone after dinner with the Duke, who had but two subjects he could talk upon — hunting and music. Having exhausted hunting, Scott thought he would bring forward his lately acquired learning in fiddles, upon which his Grace became quite animated, and immediately whispered some orders to the butler, in consequence of which there soon entered into the room about half-a-dozen tall footmen, each bearing a fiddle-case; and Scott now found his musical knowledge brought to no less trying a test than that of telling, by the tone of each fiddle, as the Duke played it, by what artist it had been made. 'By guessing and management,' he said, 'I got on pretty well, till we were, to my great relief, summoned to coffee.'"

In handing to me the pages from which I have taken these scraps, Mr. Moore says: "I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give

you *carte blanche* to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one — it was that he was a *thorough good fellow.*" What Scott thought of Moore, the reader shall see presently.

The author of Lalla Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much-talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troop, and died Duchess of St. Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs. Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete, unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connection with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank, I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr. Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honors of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue, leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh, the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts — her future lord the Duke of St. Albans — one of his Grace's sisters — a *dame de compagnie* (vulgarly styled a Toady) — a brace of physicians — for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous — and, besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person; she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts — and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by

night.[1] With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation; but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs. Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw something, of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping. They were on the outlook for absurdity and merriment; and I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying anything that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something to overawe it; but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs. Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by every blandishment of obsequious flattery, in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies, managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely Marchioness),[2] into his armorial-hall adjoining. "I said to her" (he told me), "I want to speak a word with you about Mrs. Coutts. We have known each

[1] [Scott writes to his daughter-in-law, October 25: "We expect the great Mrs. Coutts here to-day, bringing in her train the Duke of St. Albans and his sister; the former, the newspapers will have it, is slave to her *beaux yeux*, or more properly, the *beaux yeux de sa cassette*. . . . I could heartily have wished to have forfeited their good company on this occasion, being by no means in the humor to entertain strangers. His Grace shall give me a frank, and so you will be 2*s*. 6*d*. the better for the visit, and that is more than I shall." — *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. p. 361.]

[2] [Lady Compton, later Marchioness of Northampton, who had been Scott's ward. — (See *ante*, vol. v. p. 250.) — Lady Northampton died in 1830. The present Marquis (1900) is her grandson, and her youngest son, Lord Alwyne Compton, is Bishop of Ely.]

other a good while, and I know you won't take anything I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts's grand balls and fêtes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœuvre* called *tipping the cold shoulder.* This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new either to you or to me that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying, that I think the style you have all received my guest Mrs. Coutts in, this evening, is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day to stay three nights. Now, if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her." The beautiful Peeress answered, "I thank you, Sir Walter; — you have done me the great honor to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good-will." One by one, the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her Ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts. "Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts." Mrs. Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half an hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early the-

atrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's Laird of Cockpen. She stayed out her three days[1] — saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow — and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.[2]

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts's comfort because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly

[1] Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Ferrier's novels — that a visit should never exceed three days, "the *rest* day — the *drest* day — and the *prest* day."

[2] [Lockhart seems to have forgotten that Mrs. Coutts and her train were guests at Abbotsford the preceding year, and in his narrative confuses the two visits, the Duke of St. Albans belonging to the later, the ladies of rank to the earlier one. Leslie notes the mistake in his *Recollections*, and also expresses some doubt as to Mrs. Coutts having been so completely appeased by the civilities of the great ladies as Lockhart supposed. Scott refers to this visit in a letter to Miss Edgeworth, October, 1824: —

"We have been inundated by friends, all or most of whom were such as are most welcome, because they came to renew old friendships. Such were Lady Alvanley and her two daughters, whom I had passed many a merry day with in Paris, and my friend and ward Lady Compton, with her mother, sisters, and children. On the back of this came the mistress of millions, Mrs. Thomas Coutts, whom I would gladly have seen at some other time, when I could have made her Lady of the ascendant, for her husband, a relation of my father, had been at all times kind and liberal to me in some dealings which I had with him. However, I could not help the matter, so I e'en let rank and wealth fight it out their own way. Then we had Leslie, an artist of great eminence, to whom I had promised to sit for my picture, — a promise which he made me fulfil to the letter, so that I was as much bored of my chair as ever was Speaker of the House of Commons." Leslie at this time was painting the portrait for Mr. Ticknor, and he also, while at Abbotsford, made a full-length sketch of Tom Purdie for Scott.

In her reply, Miss Edgeworth declares: "I wish I had been by to see 'Rank and Wealth' fighting it out, and you sitting by, *not* to judge the prize, — with your innocent look, which I could never see without laughing internally. There is a humorously demure composure at times in the drawn-down corners of your mouth, and a lurking humor in your eyes, when you vainly attempt to expel from them all expression save that of perfectly polite submission, which no portrait could represent." — *Familiar Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 216, 217.]

things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanities of this life — or caring about money at all, beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period; and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain, if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character, as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition — to prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendor cannot be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative, with the correspondence embodied in it, must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was, after all, essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness — to say nothing of the meanness — of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanor towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs. Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the "lavish cost and little skill" of his Timon, —

> "Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;" —

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfort-

able in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done, had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by his Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character — his over-respect for worldly things in general, — I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had infinitely more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world — not it by him; and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unweariedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for preëminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been constantly exercised in recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He reverenced the Duke of Buccleuch — but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan, the representative of the old knights of Branksome. In the Duke of Hamilton he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglases; and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill-paid rental of two or three thousand a year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon, whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of the common. His name was

that of a Scotch Earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. "Well," said one of the Southrons to me, — "I had never heard that the Earl of * * * * was one of your very greatest lords in this country; even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration." The young English lord heard with some surprise, that the visitor in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship) to the Earl of * * * *. "What, then," he cried, "what *can* Sir Walter mean?" "Why," said I, "his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of * * * * may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of * * * * has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend." — Sir Walter's own title came unsought; and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher, but intransmissible rank of a Privy-Councillor. At the same time, I dare say his ear liked the knightly sound; and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gayly acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance; and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To

myself it seems to have been so; yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascinations against which he was not entirely proof; but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage; that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial, some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended.

Mrs. Coutts and her three coaches astonished Abbotsford but a few days after I returned to Chiefswood from one of my rapid journeys to London. While in the metropolis on that occasion, I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. For several years preceding 1825, the plethora of gold on the one hand, and the wildness of impatient poverty on the other, had been uniting their stimulants upon the blood and brain of the most curious of all concretes, individual or national, "John Bull;" nor had sober "Sister Peg" escaped the infection of disorders which appear to recur, at pretty regular periods, in the sanguine constitution of her brother. They who had accumulated great masses of wealth, dissatisfied with the usual rates of interest under a conscientious government really protective of property, had embarked in the most perilous and fantastic schemes for piling visionary Pelions upon the real Ossa of their money-bags; and unscrupulous dreamers, who had all to gain and nothing to lose, found it easy to borrow, from cash-encumbered neighbors, the means of pushing adventures of their own

devising, more extravagant than had been heard of since the days of the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse, had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in speculations worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade* (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew (as I did not at that time know) the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, high and low, town and country, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come erelong, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumored that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares — that another was the leading director of a railway company — a third of a gas company — while a fourth house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*, — it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints to the tune of *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ* which reached my ear, were some concerning a splendid bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew the Edinburgh house of Constable to be closely connected in business. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I

transmitted to him the rumors in question as I received them. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend of mine, well known to Scott also, told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable, that if Constable fell into any pecuniary embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was "rooted, as well as branched, like the oak." Knowing his almost painfully accurate habits of business as to matters of trivial moment, I doubted not that he had ample grounds for being quite easy as to any concerns of his own with his publisher; and though I turned northwards with anxiety enough, none of the burden had reference to that subject.

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to — (Mr. William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn, — who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly) — which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something "rotten in the state of *Muscovy*." Mr. Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reached me about five o'clock, as I was sitting down to dinner; and, about an hour afterwards, I rode over to Abbotsford, to communicate its contents. I found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whiskey and water and cigar — at this time, whenever there was no company, "his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr. Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humor of look and voice, "I am much

obliged to you for coming over, but you may rely upon it, Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta*. Don't you see," he added, lighting another cigar, "that Wright could not have heard of such a transaction the very day it happened? And can you doubt, that if Constable had been informed of it yesterday, this day's post must have brought me intelligence direct from him?" I ventured to suggest that this last point did not seem to me clear; that Constable might not, perhaps, in such a case, be in so great a hurry with his intelligence. "Ah!" said he, "the Crafty and James Ballantyne have been so much connected in business, that Fatsman would be sure to hear of anything so important; and I like the notion of his hearing it, and not sending me one of his malagrugrous *billets-doux*. He could as soon keep his eyebrows in their place if you told him there was a fire in his nursery."

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings. "You are surprised," he said, "to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared *to let on;* and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I stayed an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to

tell you that *all is right*. There was not a word of truth in the story. He is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again."

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gayly afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbor a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the nonpayment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum — any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic — his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had a share in the property of Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal. I hinted, under the year 1820, that a dispute arose about the line to be adopted by that paper in the matter of the Queen's trial, and that Scott employed his authority towards overruling the Editor's disposition to espouse the anti-ministerial side of that unhappy question. He urged every argument in his power, and in vain; for James had a just sense of his own responsibility as editor, and conscientiously differing from Sir Walter's opinion, insisted, with honorable firmness, on maintaining his own until he should be denuded of his office. I

happened to be present at one of their conversations on this subject, and in the course of it Scott used language which distinctly implied that he spoke not merely as a friend, but as a joint-proprietor of the Journal. Nor did it seem at all strange that this should be so. But that Sir Walter was and had all along been James's partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now "casting their shadows before."

It is proper to add here that the story about the banker's throwing up the book was, as subsequent revelations attested, groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary, with permission for my neighbor also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order — giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him, — and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "after-times would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion, — he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured; and Sir Walter began the journal, from which I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously. The occupation of a few

stray minutes in his dressing-room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when anything puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered (though posterity will hardly do so) a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to; and — although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded — there were minutes enough, and hours, and perhaps days, of weariness, depression, and languor, when (unless this silent confidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success of the Tales of the Crusaders had been very high; and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning Woodstock, to be taken up whenever the historical MS. should be in advance of the press.

Of the progress both of the Novel and the History the Journal will afford us fuller and clearer details than I have been able to produce as to any of his preceding works; but before I open that sealed book, I believe it will be satisfactory to the reader that I should present (as briefly as I can) my own view of the melancholy change in Sir Walter's worldly fortunes, to which almost every page of the Diary, during several sad and toilsome

years, contains some allusion. So doing, I shall avoid (in some measure at least) the necessity of interrupting, by awkward explanations, the easy tenor of perhaps the most candid Diary that ever man penned.

The early history of Scott's connection with the Ballantynes has been already given in abundant detail; and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, at whatever pain to my own feelings or those of others, from setting down, plainly and distinctly, my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers. I find, without surprise, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations.[1] That I cannot help — though I sincerely regret having been compelled, in justice to Scott, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of the elder

[1] [The representatives of the Ballantynes expressed their more than dissatisfaction in a *Refutation*, published in 1838. Lockhart answered, in *The Ballantyne-Humbug Handled* (1839); and his rejoinder produced a *Reply*, to which he returned no answer. Such slight emendations as he believed the truth required were made in the second (the standard) edition of the *Life*. If any care to go into the details of this controversy, the seventeenth chapter of Lang's *Life of Lockhart* (vol. ii. pp. 126–172) is an excellent *résumé* of the whole matter. The tone of Lockhart's pamphlet, betraying excessive irritation, is to be regretted, but the business statement in it (as in the *Life*) was approved from point to point by the surviving partner of the house of Constable, the man most conversant with the complications of the case, whom Lockhart rightly calls "one of the most acute men of business in existence," and whom the writer had every reason to respect and trust. Mr. Lang justly says that the dispute was "one of those hopeless controversies in which both parties are, to a considerable extent, practically saying the same thing. The Ballantyne Trustees repeating, 'Mr. Lockhart admits' this or that, whereas the so-called 'admission' was really the essence of Lockhart's case."]

Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man; that his principles were of a lofty stamp — his feelings pure, even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge even him with any deep or deliberate malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of "my little picaroon" indicates all that I desired to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others; nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from failings of a different sort, honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.

He had received the education, not of a printer, but of a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types — no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome he was satisfied. He had been instructed that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connection with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a

different street — not certainly an idle man — quite the reverse, though naturally indolent — but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labor; but it consisted simply and solely in the correction and revisal of proof sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment — who had undertaken the pecuniary management of the concern. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labor, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr. Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of Clarissa did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. I quoted, in a preceding volume,[1] a letter of Scott's, written when John Ballantyne and Co.'s bookselling house was breaking up, in which he says, "One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth;* it is the sheet-anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him

[1] See *ante*, vol. iv. p. 55.

at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper — and he considered that matter as fondly and proudly as Mr. Pott in Pickwick does his Gazette of Eatanswill — or correcting proof sheets, or writing critical notes and letters to the Author of Waverley. Shakespeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke, were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing-office."[1] Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2000 to £3000 a year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John Ballantyne (who had served a brief apprenticeship in a London banking-house) introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars* — the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing-house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John Ballantyne died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail of those affairs then devolved upon James; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust — but in which his all was not all that was involved.

I need not recapitulate the history of the connection between these Ballantyne firms and that of Constable.

[1] See *ante*, vol. vi. p. 244.

It was traced as accurately as my means permitted in the preceding volumes, with an eye to the catastrophe. I am willing to believe that kindly feelings had no small share in inducing Constable to uphold the credit of John Ballantyne and Company, in their several successive struggles to avoid the exposure of bankruptcy. He was, with pitiable foibles enough, and grievous faults, a man of warm, and therefore, I hardly doubt, of sympathizing temperament. Vain to excess, proud at the same time, haughty, arrogant, presumptuous, despotic — he had still, I am willing to believe, a heart. Persons who knew him longer and better than I did, assure me of their conviction that, in spite of many direct professional hindrances and thwartings, the offspring (as *he* viewed matters) partly of Tory jealousy, and partly of poetical caprice — he had, even at an early period of his life, formed a genuine affection for Scott's person, as well as a most profound veneration for his genius. I think it very possible that he began his assistance of the Ballantyne companies mainly under this generous influence — and I also believe that he had, in different ways, a friendly leaning in favor of both James and John themselves. But when he, in his overweening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these friends from commercial dishonor, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by and by, when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this "Napoleon of the press" — still as of old buoyed up to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination — appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all

the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see, that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear, that he ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thoroughgoing superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his heyday, might be heard whistling on his clerk, John Stevenson (True Jock), from the *sanctum* behind the shop, with, "Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps." Such things might well enough be believed of that harebrained creature; but how sober, solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books, of course, were kept at the printing-house; and Scott, no doubt, had it in his power to examine them as often as he liked to go there for that purpose. But did he ever descend the Canongate *once* on such an errand? I certainly much question it. I think it very likely that he now and then cast a rapid glance over the details of a week's or a month's operations; but no man who has followed him throughout can dream that he ever

grappled with the sum-total.[1] During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament House, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof sheet in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising — between Meg Dods and Captain MacTurk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

How shrewdly Scott lectures Terry in May, 1825: "The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills." — "It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty." — "I should not like to see you take flight, like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas — only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake; this would be a heart-breaking business." — "You must be careful that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of *the blunt*," etc., etc. Who can read these words — and consider that, at the very hour when they fell from Scott's pen, he was meditating a new purchase of land to the extent of £40,000 — and that nevertheless the "certainty of the arrival of times of payment for discounting bills" was within a few months of being realized to his own ruin; — who can read such words, under such a date, and not sigh the only comment, *sic vos non vobis?*

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former volume where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it

[1] It is now ascertained and admitted that the Ballantyne books were *never balanced* during the later years of the connection. — (1839.)

increased the wonder of their ruin that the late Baronet had "kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket.*" It is, nevertheless, true that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son, when first joining the 18th Hussars, about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to: but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, "the time for paying which up must certainly come," without keeping any efficient watch on their proceedings — without knowing, any one Christmas, for how many thousands, or rather tens of thousands, he was responsible as *a printer in the Canongate!*

This is sufficiently astonishing — and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable; but still, in the absence of a circumstance which Sir Walter, however vigilant, could hardly have been expected to anticipate as within the range of possibility, he would have been in no danger of a "check that must throw him on the breakers" — of finding himself, after his flutterings over The Happy Valley, "in the lake." He could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should, in

case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also — such was the incredible looseness of it — the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonor — these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie uninquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. They were nearly all flung into circulation in the course of this maddening period of panic. And by this one circumstance it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the house of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burns's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the Edinburgh Review. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed; and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. He had, with the only person who might have been supposed capable of controlling him in

his later years, the authority of age and a quasi-parental relationship to sustain the natural influence of great and commanding talents; his proud temperament and his glowing imagination played into each other's hands; and he scared suspicion, or trampled remonstrance, whenever (which probably was seldom) he failed to infuse the fervor of his own self-confidence. But even his gross imprudence in the management of his own great business would not have been enough to involve him in absolute ruin: had the matter halted there, and had he, suspending, as he meant to do, all minor operations, concentred his energies, in alliance with Scott, upon the new and dazzling adventure of the Cheap Miscellany, I have no doubt the damage of early misreckonings would soon have been altogether obliterated. But what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to him. The house of Hurst, Robinson and Co. had long been his London agents and correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him — and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not — or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit — while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too painfully conscious of the "strong tricks" he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable; though an offence lay behind, which even his charity could not forgive. Of that I need not as yet speak. I have done all that seems to me

necessary for enabling the reader to apprehend the nature and extent of the pecuniary difficulties in which Scott was about to be involved, when he commenced his Diary of 1825.

For the rest, his friends, and, above all, posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections. They who knew and loved him must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labor, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been, of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently reopened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind — I mean that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflec-

tions with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway — beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded character and history; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory, of this lifelong abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sibyl Grey and the Abbotsford Hunt. Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbor Mr. Scott of Gala's ground, he adventured to leap the Catrail — that venerable relic of the days of

> "Reged wide
> And fair Strath-Clyde,"

of which the reader may remember many notices in his early letters to George Ellis. He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence, without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER LXV

SIR WALTER'S DIARY BEGUN, NOVEMBER 20, 1825. — SKETCHES OF VARIOUS FRIENDS. — WILLIAM CLERK. — CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE. — LORD ABERCROMBY. — THE FIRST EARL OF MINTO. — LORD BYRON. — HENRY MACKENZIE. — CHIEF BARON SHEPHERD. — SOLICITOR-GENERAL HOPE. — THOMAS MOORE. — CHARLES MATHEWS. — COUNT DAVIDOFF, ETC., ETC. — SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH. — RELIGIOUS OPINIONS AND FEELINGS. — VARIOUS ALARMS ABOUT THE HOUSE OF HURST, ROBINSON AND COMPANY. — "STORM BLOWS OVER" — AND SONG OF BONNY DUNDEE, WRITTEN AT CHRISTMAS

1825

THE Journal, on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal;" — and this foot-note to *Gurnal*, "A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs. Lockhart." This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The *motto* is, —

> "As I walked by myself,
> I talked to myself,
> And thus myself said to me." — *Old Song.*

These lines are quoted also in his reviewal of Pepys's Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland; and I never observed him

more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips.

The reader cannot expect that any chapter in a Diary of this sort should be printed *in extenso* within a few years of the writer's death. The editor has, for reasons which need not be explained, found it necessary to omit some passages altogether — to abridge others — and very frequently to substitute asterisks or arbitrary initials for names. But wherever omissions or alterations have been made, these were dictated by regard for the feelings of living persons; and, if any passages which have been retained should prove offensive to such feelings, there is no apology to be offered, but that the editor found they could not be struck out, without losing some statement of fact, opinion, or sentiment, which it seemed impossible to sacrifice without injustice to Sir Walter Scott's character and history.[1]

DIARY

Edinburgh — November 20, 1825. — I have all my life regretted that I did not keep a regular Journal. I have myself lost recollection of much that was interesting; and I have deprived my family [and the public] of some curious information by not carrying this resolution into effect. I have bethought me, on seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes, that he probably had hit upon the right way of keeping such a memorandum-book, by throwing out all pretence to regularity and order, and

[1] [Fortunately for the English-reading world, in the year 1890, when there was no longer any reason why the entire Journal should not be published, it appeared "exactly as Scott left it — but for the correction of obvious slips of the pen, and the omission of some details chiefly of family and domestic interest," under the singularly able, careful, and sympathetic editorship of Mr. David Douglas. Nearly half of the Journal was then printed for the first time.]

marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan; and behold, I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's Album. *Nota bene.* — John Lockhart, and Anne, and I are to raise a Society for the Suppression of Albums. It is a most troublesome shape of mendicity. Sir, your autograph — a line of poetry — or a prose sentence! — Among all the sprawling sonnets, and blotted trumpery that dishonors these miscellanies, a man must have a good stomach that can swallow this botheration as a compliment.

I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour. — There is much less of exaggeration about the Irish than might have been suspected. Their poverty is not exaggerated; it is on the extreme verge of human misery; their cottages would scarce serve for pig-sties, even in Scotland — and their rags seem the very refuse of a rag-shop, and are disposed on their bodies with such ingenious variety of wretchedness, that you would think nothing but some sort of perverted taste could have assembled so many shreds together. You are constantly fearful that some knot or loop will give, and place the individual before you in all the primitive simplicity of Paradise. Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom and well-colored.

Dined with us, being Sunday, Will. Clerk and C. Sharpe. William Clerk is the second son of the celebrated author of Naval Tactics.[1] I have known him intimately since our college days; and, to my thinking, never met a man of greater powers, or more complete information on all desirable subjects. In youth he had strongly the Edinburgh *pruritus disputandi;* but habits of society have greatly mellowed it, and though still anxious to gain your suffrage to his views, he endeavors

[1] [John Clerk of Eldin, whose *Essay on Naval Tactics* was first published in 1790, and in its complete form in 1804.]

CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

rather to conciliate your opinion than conquer it by force. Still there is enough of tenacity of sentiment to prevent, in London society, where all must go slack and easy, W. C. from rising to the very top of the tree as a conversation man; who must not only wind the thread of his argument gracefully, but also know when to let go. But I like the Scotch taste better; there is more matter, more information — above all, more spirit in it. Clerk will, I am afraid, leave the world little more than the report of his powers. He is too indolent to finish any considerable work. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is another very remarkable man. He was bred for a clergyman, but never took orders. He has infinite wit and a great turn for antiquarian lore, as the publications of Kirkton, etc., bear witness. His drawings are the most fanciful and droll imaginable — a mixture between Hogarth and some of those foreign masters who painted temptations of St. Anthony, and such grotesque subjects. As a poet he has not a very strong touch. Strange that his finger-ends can describe so well what he cannot bring out clearly and firmly in words. If he were to make drawing a resource, it might raise him a large income. But though a lover of antiquities, and, therefore, of expensive trifles, C. K. S. is too aristocratic to use his art to assist his purse. He is a very complete genealogist, and has made many detections in Douglas and other books on pedigree, which our nobles would do well to suppress if they had an opportunity. Strange that a man should be curious after scandal of centuries old! Not but Charles loves it fresh and fresh also, for being very much a fashionable man, he is always master of the reigning report, and he tells the anecdote with such gusto that there is no helping sympathizing with him — a peculiarity of voice adding not a little to the general effect. My idea is, that C. K. S., with his oddities, tastes, satire, and high aristocratic feelings, resembles Horace Walpole — perhaps in his person also, in a gen-

eral way. — See Miss Hawkins's Anecdotes[1] for a description of the author of the Castle of Otranto.[2] — No other company at dinner except my cheerful and good-humored friend *Missie* Macdonald,[3] so called in fondness. One bottle of champagne, with the ladies' assistance, two of claret. — I observe that both these great connoisseurs were very nearly, if not quite agreed, that there are *no* absolutely undoubted originals of Queen Mary. But how, then, should we be so very distinctly informed as to her features? What has become of all the originals which suggested these innumerable copies? Surely Mary must have been as unfortunate in this as in other particulars of her life.

November 21, 1825. — I am enamoured of my journal. I wish the zeal may but last. — Once more of Ireland. I said their poverty was not exaggerated — neither is their wit — nor their good-humor — nor their whimsical absurdity — nor their courage. *Wit.* — I gave a fellow a shilling on some occasion when sixpence was the fee. "Remember you owe me sixpence, Pat." "May your honor live till I pay you." There was courtesy as well as art in this, and all the clothes on Pat's back would have been dearly bought by the sum in question.

Good-humor. — There is perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin — buttermilk, potatoes — a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honor may sit down and

[1] *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs*, collected by Lætitia Matilda Hawkins, 8vo, London, 1822, pp. 91–117; 308–313.

[2] [Mr. Sharpe died in 1851. His *Letters*, illustrated with reproductions of a number of his drawings, with a brief introductory memoir, were published in 1888.]

[3] Miss Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakill. [There are glimpses of this favorite *niece* of the Clerks' Table in Miss Ferrier's *Memoir and Correspondence*. The young lady is spoken of as almost one of the family in the Scott household, the daughters of which she did not long survive. In 1841, Miss Ferrier writes of the death of "Missie," "once the gayest of the gay, but prepared by long suffering and much tribulation for the happy change that has taken place."]

be out of the smoke, and those who beg everywhere else seem desirous to exercise free hospitality in their own houses. Their natural disposition is turned to gayety and happiness: while a Scotchman is thinking about the term-day, or, if easy on that subject, about hell in the next world — while an Englishman is making a little hell in the present, because his muffin is not well roasted — Pat's mind is always turned to fun and ridicule. They are terribly excitable, to be sure, and will murder you on slight suspicion, and find out next day that it was all a mistake, and that it was not yourself they meant to kill at all at all.

Absurdity. — They were widening the road near Lord Claremont's seat as we passed. A number of cars were drawn up together at a particular point, where we also halted, as we understood they were blowing a rock, and the *shot* was expected presently to go off. After waiting two minutes or so, a fellow called out something, and our carriage as a planet, and the cars for satellites, started all forward at once, the Irishmen whooping, and the horses galloping. Unable to learn the meaning of this, I was only left to suppose that they had delayed firing the intended *shot* till we should pass, and that we were passing quickly to make the delay as short as possible. No such thing. By dint of making great haste, we got within ten yards of the rock just when the blast took place, throwing dust and gravel on our carriage; and had our postilion brought us a little nearer (it was not for want of hallooing and flogging that he did not), we should have had a still more serious share of the explosion. The explanation I received from the drivers was that they had been told by the overseer that as the *mine* had been *so long* in going off, he dared say we would have time to pass it — so we just waited long enough to make the danger imminent. I have only to add, that two or three people got behind the carriage, just for nothing but to see how our honors got past.

Went to the Oil-Gas Committee this morning, of which concern I am President, or Chairman. This brings me into company with a body of active business-beings, money-making citizens of Edinburgh, chiefly Whigs, by the way, whose sentiments and proceedings amuse me. The stock is rather low in the market.

Dined with Sir Robert Dundas, where we met Lord and Lady Melville. My little *nieces* (*ex officio*) gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music; and complicated harmonies seem to me a babble of confused though pleasing sounds. Yet simple melodies, especially if connected with words and ideas, have as much effect on me as on most people. But then I hate to hear a young person sing without feeling and expression suited to the song. I cannot bear a voice that has no more life in it than a pianoforte or a bugle-horn. There is about all the fine arts a something of soul and spirit, which, like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want. Sir Joshua, or some other great painter, was looking at a picture on which much pains had been bestowed. — "Why, yes," he said, in a hesitating manner, "it is very clever — very well done — can't find fault; but it wants something; it wants — it wants — d—n me — it wants THAT" — throwing his hand over his head, and snapping his fingers. Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. Next to him, David Macculloch for Scotch songs. The last, when a boy at Dumfries, was much admired by Burns, who used to get him to try over the words which he composed to new melodies. He is brother to Macculloch of Ardwell.

November 22. — *Moore.* — I saw Moore (for the first time, I may say) this season. We had indeed met in public twenty years ago. There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him which

is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little — very little man. Less, I think, than Lewis, and something like him in person; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it.

I was aware that Byron had often spoken, both in private society and in his Journal, of Moore and myself, in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians; Moore a scholar, I none; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note; he a democrat, I an aristocrat — with many other points of difference; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humored fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to contemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alehouse, and who called himself "*the great Twalmly — inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen.*" He also enjoys the *mot pour rire*, and so do I. It was a pity that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason — *Premat Nox alta.* It would be a delightful addition to life, if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one. We went to the theatre together, and the house, being luckily a good one, received T. M. with rapture.

I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.

Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. & R., Constable's great agents. Should they *go*, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God, I have enough to pay more than 20*s*. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing, or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January it will do much, and it is possible. Could not write to purpose for thick-coming fancies.

"My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir;
To keep the temper pin in tiff,
Employs aft my hand, sir."

Went to dine at the Lord Justice-Clerk's,[1] as I thought by invitation, but it was for Tuesday se'ennight. Returned very well pleased, not being exactly in the humor for company, and had a beefsteak. My appetite is surely, excepting as to quantity, that of a farmer, for, eating moderately of anything, my epicurean pleasure is in the most simple diet. Wine I seldom taste when alone, and use instead a little spirits and water. I have of late diminished the quantity, for fear of a weakness inductive to a diabetes — a disease which broke up my father's health, though one of the most temperate men who ever lived. I smoke a couple of cigars instead, which operates equally as a sedative —

"Just to drive the cold winter away,
And drown the fatigues of the day."

[1] [The Right Hon. David Boyle.]

I smoked a good deal about twenty years ago when at Ashestiel; but coming down one morning to the parlor, I found, as the room was small and confined, that the smell was unpleasant, and laid aside the use of the *Nicotian weed* for many years; but was again led to use it by the example of my son, a hussar officer, and my son-in-law, an Oxford student. I could lay it aside to-morrow; I laugh at the dominion of custom in this and many things.

"We make the giants first, and then — *do not* kill them."

November 23. — On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that like Rousseau, he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me, that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this, by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him, cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called The Liberal, in communion with men on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties. Shelley wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and without some tendency towards which, genius perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine, to play rapidly, must

not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminishes the impetus.

Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance: William Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, "Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself;" and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-colored dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) in their prose. He used to say he dared believe the celebrated courtesan of Venice, about whom Rousseau makes so piquant a story, was, if one could see her, a draggle-tailed wench enough. I believe that he embellished his own amours considerably, and that he was, in many respects, *le fanfaron de vices qu'il n'avoit pas*. He loved to be thought woeful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In the same manner he *crammed* people, as it is termed, about duels and the like, which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial style to the lackadaisical. His example has formed a sort of upper house of poetry; — but

"There will be many peers
Ere such another Byron."

. . . Talking of Abbotsford, it begins to be haunted by too much company of every kind, but especially foreigners. I do not like them. I hate fine waistcoats, and breastpins upon dirty shirts. I detest the impudence that pays a stranger compliments, and harangues about an author's works in his own house, which is surely ill-breeding. Moreover, they are seldom long of making it evident that they know nothing about what they are talking of, excepting having seen The Lady of the Lake at the opera.

Dined at St. Catherine's[1] with the Lord Advocate, Lord Melville, Lord Justice-Clerk, Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, — all class companions, and acquainted well for more than forty years. All excepting Lord J. C. were at Fraser's class, High School. Boyle joined us at college. There are, besides, Sir Adam Ferguson, Colin Mackenzie, James Hope, Dr. James Buchan, Claud Russell, and perhaps two or three more of and about the same period — but

"Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto."

November 24. — Talking of strangers, London held, some four or five years since, one of those animals who are lions at first, but by transmutation of two seasons, become in regular course *bores* — Ugo Foscolo by name, a haunter of Murray's shop and of literary parties. Ugly as a baboon, and intolerably conceited, he spluttered, blustered, and disputed, without even knowing the principles upon which men of sense render a reason, and screamed all the while like a pig with a knife in his throat. Another such animalaccio is a brute of a [Sicilian] Marquis de * * * *, who [wrote something about Byron. He]

[1] St. Catherine's, the seat of Sir William Rae, Bart., then Lord Advocate, is about three miles from Edinburgh. [Sir William Rae died in 1842.]

inflicted two days on us at Abbotsford. These gentry never know what to make of themselves in the forenoon, but sit tormenting the women to play at proverbs and such trash.

Foreigner of a different caste. There was lately at Abbotsford, and is here for education just now, a young Count Davidoff, with his tutor, Mr. Collyer. He is nephew of the famous Orloffs. It is quite surprising how much sense and sound thinking this youth has at the early age of sixteen, without the least self-conceit or forwardness. On the contrary, he seems kind, modest, and ingenuous.[1] To questions which I asked about the state of Russia, he answered with the precision and accuracy of twice his years. I should be sorry the saying were verified in him —

"So wise so young, they say, do ne'er live long."[2]

I saw also at Abbotsford two Frenchmen whom I liked, friends of Miss Dumergue. One, called Le Noir, is the author of a tragedy which he had the grace never to quote, and which I, though poked by some malicious persons, had *not* the grace even to hint at. They were disposed at first to be complimentary, but I convinced them it was not the custom here, and they took it well, and were agreeable.

A little bilious this morning, for the first time these six months. It cannot be the London matters which stick on my stomach, for that is mending, and may have good effects on myself and others.

Dined with Robert Cockburn. Company, Lord Mel-

[1] M. Davidoff has, in his mature life, amply justified Sir Walter's prognostications. He has, I understand, published in the Russian language a tribute to the memory of Scott. But his Travels in Greece and Asia Minor are well known, and considered as in a high degree honorable to his taste and learning. — (1839.)

[2] *King Richard III.* Act III. Scene 1. ["Count Orloff Davidoff lived to falsify this 'saying.' He revisited England in 1872, and had the pleasure of meeting with Scott's great-granddaughter, and talking to her of these old happy Abbotsford days." — D. D.]

ville and family; Sir John and Lady Hope; Lord and Lady R. Kerr, and so forth. Combination of colliers general, and coals up to double price; the men will not work *although*, or rather *because* they can make from thirty to forty shillings per week. Lord R. Kerr told us he had a letter from Lord Forbes (son of Earl Granard, Ireland), that he was asleep in his house at Castle Forbes, when awakened by a sense of suffocation, which deprived him of the power of stirring a limb, yet left him the consciousness that the house was on fire. At this moment, and while his apartment was in flames, his large dog jumped on the bed, seized his shirt, and dragged him to the staircase, where the fresh air restored his powers of existence and of escape. This is very different from most cases of preservation of life by the canine race, when the animal generally jumps into the water, in which element he has force and skill. That of fire is as hostile to him as to mankind.

November 25. — Read Jeffrey's neat and well-intended address to the mechanics upon their combinations. Will it do good? Umph. It takes only the hand of a Lilliputian to light a fire, but would require the diuretic powers of Gulliver to extinguish it. The Whigs will live and die in the heresy that the world is ruled by little pamphlets and speeches, and that if you can sufficiently demonstrate that a line of conduct is most consistent with men's interest, you have therefore and thereby demonstrated that they will at length, after a few speeches on the subject, adopt it of course. In this case we should have no need of laws or churches, for I am sure there is no difficulty in proving that moral, regular, and steady habits conduce to men's best interest, and that vice is not sin merely, but folly. But of these men, each has passions and prejudices, the gratification of which he prefers, not only to the general weal, but to that of himself as an individual. Under the action of these way-

ward impulses, a man drinks to-day, though he is sure of starving to-morrow; he murders to-morrow, though he is sure to be hanged on Wednesday; and people are so slow to believe that which makes against their own predominant passions, that mechanics will combine to raise the price for one week, though they destroy the manufacture forever. The best remedy seems to be the probable supply of laborers from other trades. Jeffrey proposes each mechanic shall learn some other trade than his own, and so have two strings to his bow. He does not consider the length of a double apprenticeship. To make a man a good weaver and a good tailor would require as much time as the patriarch served for his two wives. Each mechanic has, indeed, a second trade, for he can dig and do rustic work. Perhaps the best reason for breaking up the association will prove to be the expenditure of the money which they have been simple enough to levy from the industrious for the support of the idle. How much provision for the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan, has been expended in the attempt to get wages which the manufacturer cannot afford them, at any possible chance of selling his commodity!

I had a bad fall last night coming home. There were unfinished houses at the east end of Atholl Crescent, and as I was on foot, I crossed the street to avoid the materials which lay about; but, deceived by the moonlight, I slipped ankle-deep into a sea of mud (honest earth and water, thank God), and fell on my hands. Never was there such a representative of *Wall* in Pyramus and Thisbe — I was absolutely rough-cast. Luckily Lady S. had retired when I came home; so I enjoyed my tub of water without either remonstrance or condolences. Cockburn's hospitality will get the benefit and renown of my downfall, and yet has no claim to it. In future, though, I must take my coach at night

N. B. Within eight weeks after recording this graceful act of submission, I found I was unable to keep a carriage at all.

— a control on one's freedom, but it must be submitted to. I found a letter from Cadell, giving a cheering account of things in London. Their correspondent is getting into his strength. Three days ago I would have been contented to buy this *consola*, as Judy says,[1] dearer than by a dozen falls in the mud.

Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford, his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe, her confidant in sincerity. She had refused him twice, and decidedly: he was merely on the footing of friendship. I urged it was akin to love. She allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least intention that way. Is this frank admission more favorable for the Duke than an absolute protestation against the possibility of such a marriage? I think not. It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good, if the means be shown to her. She can be very entertaining, too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without some ostentation. But what then? If the Duke marries her, he insures an immense fortune; if she marries him, she has the first rank. [If he marries a woman older than himself by twenty years, she marries a man younger in wit by twenty degrees. I do not think he will dilapidate her fortune — he seems quiet and gentle. I do not think that she will abuse his softness — of disposition, shall I say, or of heart?] The disparity of ages concerns no one but themselves; so they have my consent to marry, if they can get each other's. Just as this is

[1] This alludes to a strange old woman, keeper of a public house among the Wicklow mountains, who, among a world of oddities, cut short every word ending in *tion*, by the omission of the termination, — *consola* for consolation — *bothera* for botheration, etc., etc. Lord Plunkett had taken care to parade Judy and all her peculiarities.

written, enter my Lord of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte, to beg I would recommend a book of sermons to Mrs. Coutts. Much obliged for her good opinion: recommended Logan's[1] — one poet should always speak for another. The mission, I suppose, was a little display on the part of good Mrs. Coutts of authority over her high aristocratic suitor. I did not suspect her of turning *devotee*, and retract my consent as given above, unless she remains "burly, brisk, and jolly."[2] Dined quiet with wife and daughter. Robert Cadell looked in in the evening on business.

I here register my purpose to practise economics. I have little temptation to do otherwise. Abbotsford is all that I can make it, and too large for the property; so I resolve —

No more building;

No purchases of land, till times are quite safe;

No buying books or expensive trifles — I mean to any extent; and

Clearing off encumbrances with the returns of this year's labor; —

Which resolutions, with health and my habits of industry, will make me "sleep in spite of thunder."

After all, it is hard that the vagabond stock-jobbing Jews should, for their own purposes, make such a shake of credit as now exists in London, and menace the credit of men trading on sure funds like Hurst and Robinson. It is just like a set of pick-pockets, who raise a mob, in which honest folks are knocked down and plundered, that they may pillage safely in the midst of the confusion they have excited.

[1] [The Rev. John Logan (1748–88) for a few years minister of South Leith, and a popular preacher. He is best remembered by his poems, *To the Cuckoo* and *The Braes of Yarrow*.]

[2] [The marriage took place in June, 1827. The Duchess died ten years later. A letter she wrote to Scott, regarding her marriage, will be found in a note to the *Journal*, vol. i. p. 414.]

November 26. — The Court met late, and sat till *one;* detained from that hour till four o'clock, being engaged in the perplexed affairs of Mr. James Stewart of Brugh. This young gentleman is heir to a property of better than £1000 a year in Orkney. His mother married very young, and was wife, mother, and widow, in the course of the first year. Being unfortunately under the direction of a careless agent, she was unlucky enough to embarrass her affairs. I was asked to accept the situation of one of the son's curators; and trust to clear out his affairs and hers — at least I will not fail for want of application. I have lent her £300 on a second (and therefore doubtful) security over her house in Newington, bought for £1000, and on which £600 is already secured. I have no connection with the family except that of compassion, and may not be rewarded even by thanks when the young man comes of age. I have known my father often so treated by those whom he had labored to serve. But if we do not run some hazard in our attempts to do good, where is the merit of them? So I will bring through my Orkney laird if I can. Dined at home quiet with Lady S. and Anne.[1]

I was obliged to give this up in consequence of my own misfortunes.

[1] ["*November* 27. — Some time since John Murray entered into a contract with my son-in-law, John G. Lockhart, giving him on certain ample conditions the management and editorship of the *Quarterly Review*, for which they could certainly scarcely find a fitter person, both from talents and character. It seems that [Sir John] Barrow and one or two stagers have taken alarm at Lockhart's character as a satirist, and his supposed accession to some of the freaks in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and down comes young [Benjamin] D'Israeli to Scotland imploring Lockhart to make interest with my friends in London to remove objections, and so forth. I have no idea of telling all and sundry that my son-in-law is not a slanderer or a silly, thoughtless lad, although he was six or seven years ago engaged in some light satires. I only wrote to Heber and to Southey — the first upon the subject of the reports which had startled Murray (the most timorous, as Byron called him, of all God's booksellers), and such a letter as he may show Barrow if he judges proper. To Southey I wrote more generally, acquainting him of my son's appointment to the Editorship, and mentioning his qualifications, touching, at the same time, on his very slight connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*, and his innocence as to those gam-

November 28. — People make me the oddest requests. It is not unusual for an Oxonian or Cantab, who has

bades which may have given offence, and which, I fear, they may ascribe too truly to an eccentric neighbor of their own [John Wilson]. . . . My physic has wrought well, for it brought a letter from Murray saying all was right, that D'Israeli was sent to me, not to Lockhart, and that I was only invited to write two confidential letters, and other incoherencies — which intimate his fright has got into another quarter. It is interlined and franked by Barrow, which shows that all is well, and that John's induction into his office will be easy and pleasant. I have not the least fear of his success; his talents want only a worthy sphere of exertion. . . . It is odd enough that many years since I had the principal share in erecting this Review, which has been since so prosperous, and now it is placed under the management of my son-in-law upon the most honorable principle of *detur digniori*. Yet there are sad drawbacks so far as family comfort is concerned. To-day is Sunday, when they always dined with us, and generally met a family friend or two, but we are no longer to expect them. In the country, where their little cottage was within a mile or two of Abbotsford, we shall miss their society still more, for Chiefswood was the perpetual object of our walks, rides, and drives. Lockhart is such an excellent family man, so fond of his wife and child, that I hope all will go well. . . .

"*November* 28. — I have the less dread, or rather the less anxiety, about the consequences of this migration, that I repose much confidence in Sophia's tact and good sense. Her manners are good, and have the appearance of being perfectly natural. She is quite conscious of the limited range of her musical talents, and never makes them common, or produces them out of place, — a rare virtue; moreover, she is proud enough, and will not be easily netted and patronized by any of that class of ladies who may be called Lion-providers for town and country. She is domestic, besides, and will not be disposed to gad about. . . . Lockhart must be liked where his good qualities are known, and where his fund of information has room to be displayed. But, notwithstanding a handsome exterior and face, I am not sure he will succeed in London Society; he sometimes reverses the proverb, and gives the *volte strette e pensiere sciolti*, withdraws his attention from the company, or attaches himself to some individual, gets into a corner, and seems to be quizzing the rest. This is the want of early habits of being in society, and a life led much at college. Nothing is, however, so popular, and so deservedly so, as to take an interest in whatever is going forward in society. A wise man always finds his account in it, and will receive information and fresh views of life even in the society of fools. Abstain from society altogether when you are not able to play some part in it. This reserve, and a sort of Hidalgo air joined to his character as a satirist, have done the best-humored fellow in the world some injury in the opinion of Edinburgh folks. In London it is of less consequence whether he please in general society or not, since if he can establish himself as a genius it will only be called 'Pretty Fanny's Way.'" — *Journal*, vol. i. pp. 20–24.]

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

From the drawing by Maclise

outrun his allowance, and of whom I know nothing, to apply to me for the loan of £20, £50, or £100. A captain of the Danish naval service writes to me, that being in distress for a sum of money by which he might transport himself to Columbia to offer his services in assisting to free that province, he had dreamed I generously made him a present of it. I can tell him his dream by contraries. I begin to find, like Joseph Surface, that too good a character is inconvenient. I don't know what I have done to gain so much credit for generosity, but I suspect I owe it to being supposed, as Puff says, one of "those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence." Not too much of that neither, my dear petitioners, though I may thank myself that your ideas are not correct.

Dined at Melville Castle, whither I went through a snowstorm. I was glad to find myself once more in a place connected with many happy days. Met Sir R. Dundas and my old friend George, now Lord Abercromby, with his Lady, and a beautiful girl, his daughter. He is what he always was, the best-humored man living; and our meetings, now more rare than formerly, are seasoned with many a recollection of old frolics and old friends. I am entertained to see him just the same he has always been, never yielding up his own opinion in fact, and yet in words acquiescing in all that could be said against it. George was always like a willow — he never offered resistance to the breath of argument, but never moved from his rooted opinion, blow as it listed. Exaggeration might make these peculiarities highly dramatic: Conceive a man who always seems to be acquiescing in your sentiments, yet never changes his own, and this with a sort of *bonhomie* which shows there is not a particle of deceit intended. He is only desirous to spare you the trouble of contradiction.[1]

[1] ["*November* 29. — A letter from Southey, malcontent about Murray having accomplished the change in the *Quarterly* without speaking to him, and quoting the twaddle of some old woman, male or female, about Lock-

November 29. — Dined at Justice-Clerk's — the President — Captain Smollett of Bonhill — our new Commander-in-Chief, Hon. Sir Robert O'Callaghan, brother to Earl of Lismore, a fine soldier-like man, with orders and badges; — also his younger brother, an agreeable man, whom I met at Lowther Castle this season. He composes his own music and sings his own poetry — has much humor, enhanced by a strong touch of national dialect, which is always a rich sauce to an Irishman's good things. Dandyish, but not offensively; and seems to have a warm feeling for the credit of his country — rather inconsistent with the trifling and selfish quietude of a mere man of society.

November 30. — I am come to the time when "those that look out of the windows shall be darkened." I must

hart's earlier *jeux d'esprit*, but concluding most kindly that out of regard to my daughter and me he did not mean to withdraw. That he has done yeoman's service to the *Review* is certain, with his genius, his universal reading, his powers of regular industry, and at the outset a name which, though less generally popular than it deserves, is still too respectable to be withdrawn without injury. I could not in reply point out to him what is the truth, that his rigid Toryism and High Church prejudices rendered him an unsafe counsellor in a matter where the spirit of the age must be consulted; but I pointed out to him what I am sure is true, that Murray, apprehensive of his displeasure, had not ventured to write to him out of mere timidity and not from any intention to offend. I treated lightly his old woman's apprehensions and cautions, and all that gossip about friends and enemies, to which a splendid number or two will be sufficient answer, and I accepted with due acknowledgment his proposal of continued support. I cannot say I was afraid of his withdrawing. Lockhart will have hard words with him, for, great as Southey's powers are, he has not the art to make them work popularly; he is often diffuse, and frequently sets much value on minute and unimportant facts and useless pieces of abstruse knowledge. Living too exclusively in a circle where he is idolized both for his genius and the excellence of his disposition, he has acquired strong prejudices, though all of an upright and honorable cast. He rides his High Church hobby too hard, and it will not do to run a tilt upon it against all the world. Gifford used to crop his articles considerably, and they bear mark of it, being sometimes *décousues*. Southey said that Gifford cut out his middle joints. When John comes to use the carving knife I fear Dr. Southey will not be so tractable." — *Journal*, vol. i. p. 25.]

now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old *Braxie* said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor; and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mortal vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see; and while they enjoy strength and activity, I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humored, and active men often display the same elasticity of mind as of body. These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But, even for these things, God shall call us to judgment.

Some months since, I joined with other literary folks in subscribing a petition for a pension to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, which we thought was a tribute merited by her as an authoress; and, in my opinion, much more by the firmness and elasticity of mind with which she had borne a succession of great domestic calamities. Unhappily there was only about £100 open on the pension list, and this the ministers assigned in equal portions to Mrs. G—— and a distressed lady, granddaughter of a for-

feited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. G——, proud as a Highland-woman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a bluestocking, has taken this partition in *malam partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed, with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the King. This is not the way to make her *plack* a *bawbee*, and Lord M., a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me, to know whether Mrs. G—— will accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humor, I have got the good-humored Man of Feeling to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord M. There is no great doubt how it will end, for your scornful dog will always eat your dirty pudding. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied; — her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline.

Dined with my cousin, Robert Rutherford, being the first invitation since my uncle's death, and our cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel Russell[1] of Ashestiel, with his sister Anne — the former newly returned from India — a fine gallant fellow, and distinguished as a cavalry officer. He came overland from India, and has observed a good deal. Knight Marischal not well, so unable to attend the convocation of kith and kin.

December 1. — Colonel Russell told me that the European Government had discovered an ingenious mode of diminishing the number of burnings of widows. It seems the Shaster positively enjoins that the pile shall be so constructed that, if the victim should repent even at

[1] Now Major-General Sir James Russell, K. C. B. [He married Katherine Mary, daughter of Sir James Hall of Dunglass, and their younger daughter, Katherine Anne, became the wife of Colonel Laurence Lockhart, a nephew of Scott's son-in-law, and, like him, for some years a brilliant contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Sir James Russell died in 1859, in his 78th year, at Ashestiel, now (1900) in possession of his elder daughter.]

the moment when it is set on fire, she may still have the means of saving herself. The Brahmins soon found it was necessary to assist the resolution of the sufferers, by means of a little pit into which they contrive to let the poor widow sink, so as to prevent her reaping any benefit from a late repentance. But the Government has brought them back to the regard of this law, and only permit the burning to go on when the pile is constructed with full opportunity of a *locus penitentiæ*. Yet the widow is so degraded if she dare to survive, that the number of burnings is still great. The quantity of female children destroyed by the Rajapout tribes, Colonel R. describes as very great indeed. They are strangled by the mother. The principle is the aristocratic pride of these high castes, who breed up no more daughters than they can reasonably hope to find matches for in their own rank. Singular how artificial systems of feeling can be made to overcome that love of offspring which seems instinctive in the females, not of the human race only, but of the lower animals. This is the reverse of our system of increasing game by shooting the old cock birds. It is a system would aid Malthus rarely.

I think this journal will suit me well: if I can wax myself into an idea that it is purely voluntary, it may go on — *nulla dies sine lineâ*. But never a being hated task-work as I hate it, from my infancy upwards, and yet I have done a great deal in my day. It is not that I am idle in my nature neither. But propose to me to do one thing, and it is inconceivable the desire I have to do something else — not that it is more easy or more pleasant, but just because it is escaping from an imposed task. I cannot trace this love of contradiction to any distinct source, but it has haunted me all my life. I could almost suppose it was mechanical, and that the imposition of a piece of duty-labor operated on me like the mace of a bad billiard player, which gives an impulse to the ball indeed, but sends it off at a tangent different

from the course designed. Now, if I expend such eccentric movements on this journal, it will be turning a wretched propensity to some tolerable account. If I had thus employed the hours and half hours which I have whiled away in putting off something that must needs be done at last, my conscience! I should have had a journal with a witness. Sophia and Lockhart came to Edinburgh to-day, and dined with us, meeting Hector Macdonald Buchanan, his Lady, and Missie, James Skene and his Lady, Lockhart's friend Cay, etc. They are lucky to be able to assemble so many real friends, whose good wishes I am sure will follow them in their new undertaking.

December 2. — Rather a blank day for the *Gurnal*. Sophia dined with us alone, Lockhart being gone to the west to bid farewell to his father and brothers. Evening spent in talking with Sophia on their future prospects. God bless her, poor girl! she never gave me a moment's reason to complain of her. But, O my God, that poor delicate child, so clever, so animated, yet holding by this earth with so fearfully slight a tenure! Never out of his mother's thoughts, almost never out of his father's arms when he has but a single moment to give to anything. *Deus providebit.*

December 3. — [R. P. G.] called last night to excuse himself from dining with Lockhart's friends to-day. I really fear he is near an actual standstill. He has been extremely improvident. When I first knew him he had an excellent estate, and now he is deprived, I fear, of the whole reversion of the price, and this from no vice or extreme, except a wasteful mode of buying pictures and other costly trifles at high prices, and selling them again for nothing, besides extravagant housekeeping and profuse hospitality. An excellent disposition, with a considerable fund of acquired knowledge, would have

rendered him an agreeable companion, had he not affected singularity, and rendered himself accordingly singularly affected. He was very near being a poet, but a miss is as good as a mile. I knew him first, many years ago, when he was desirous of my acquaintance; but he was too poetical for me, or I was not poetical enough for him, so that we continued only ordinary acquaintance, with good-will on either side, which [R. P. G.] really deserves, as a more friendly generous creature never lived. Lockhart hopes to get something done for him, being sincerely attached to him, but says he has no hopes till he is utterly ruined. That point, I fear, is not far distant; but what Lockhart can do for him *then*, I cannot guess. His last effort failed, owing to a curious reason. [R. P. G.] had made some translations, which he does extremely well — for give him ideas, and he never wants choice of good words — and Lockhart had got Constable to offer some sort of terms for them. [R. P. G.] had always, though possessing a beautiful power of handwriting, had some whim or other about imitating that of some other person, and has written for months in the imitation of one or other of his friends. At present he has renounced this amusement, and chooses to write with a brush upon large cartridge paper, somewhat in the Chinese fashion, — so when his work, which was only to extend to one or two volumes, arrived on the shoulders of two porters, in immense bales, our jolly bibliopole backed out of the treaty, and would have nothing more to do with [R. P. G.] He is a creature that is, or would be thought, of imagination all compact, and is influenced by strange whims. But he is a kind, harmless, friendly soul, and I fear has been cruelly plundered of money, which he now wants sadly.[1]

[1] [Robert Pearse Gillies, born in 1788, was one of the early contributors to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and he figures as *Kemperhausen* in *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. In his interesting *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*, and in the *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, published in 1851, the writer shows that he had a grateful sense of the unwearied kindness of Scott, and was

Dined with Lockhart's friends, about fifty in number, who gave him a parting entertainment: John Hope, Solicitor-General, in the chair, and Robert Dundas [of Arniston] croupier. The company most highly respectable, and any man might be proud of such an indication of the interest they take in his progress in life. Tory principles rather too violently upheld by some speakers. I came home about ten; the party sat late.

December 5. — This morning Lockhart and Sophia left us early, and without leave-taking; when I rose at eight o'clock, they were *gone*. This was very right. I hate red eyes and blowing of noses. *Agere et pati Romanum est*. Of all schools, commend me to the Stoics. We cannot indeed overcome our affections, nor ought we if we could, but we may repress them within due bounds, and avoid coaxing them to make fools of those who should be their masters. I have lost some of the comforts to which I chiefly looked for enjoyment. Well, I must make the more of such as remain — God bless them. And so "I will unto my holy work again,"[1] which at present is the description of that worshipful triumvirate, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

I cannot conceive what possesses me, over every person besides, to mislay papers. I received a letter Saturday at *e'en*, enclosing a bill for £750; *no deaf nuts*. Well, I read it, and note the contents; and this day, as if it had been a wind-bill in the literal sense of the words, I search everywhere, and lose three hours of my morning — turn over all my confusion in the writing-desk — break open one or two letters, lest I should have enclosed the sweet and quickly convertible document in them, — send for a joiner, and disorganize my scrutoire, lest it

not unconscious of his own waywardness, which often made such kindness difficult. Gillies's life was for many years a struggle with pecuniary embarrassments. He died in 1858.]

[1] *King Richard III.* Act III. Scene 7.

should have fallen aside by mistake. I find it at last — the place where is of little consequence; but this trick must be amended.

Dined at the Royal Society Club, where, as usual, was a pleasant meeting — from twenty to twenty-five. It is a very good institution; we pay two guineas only for six dinners in the year, present or absent. Dine at five, or rather half-past five, at the Royal Hotel, where we have an excellent dinner, with soups, fish, etc., and all in good order; port and sherry till half-past seven, then coffee, and we go to the Society. This preface of a good dinner, to be paid for whether you partake or not, brings out many a philosopher who might not otherwise have attended. Harry Mackenzie, now in his eighty-second or third year, read part of an Essay on Dreams. Supped at Dr. Russell's usual party, which shall serve for one while.[1]

December 6. — A rare thing this literature, or love of fame or notoriety which accompanies it. Here is Mr. Henry Mackenzie on the very brink of human dissolution, as actively anxious about it as if the curtain must not soon be closed on that and everything else.[2] He calls me his literary confessor; and I am sure I am glad to return the kindnesses which he showed me long since in George Square. No man is less known from his writings. You would suppose a retired, modest, somewhat affected man, with a white handkerchief, and a sigh ready for every sentiment. No such thing: H. M. is alert as a contracting tailor's needle in every sort of business — a politician and a sportsman — shoots and fishes in a sort even to this day — and is the life of com-

[1] [Of the many Edinburgh suppers of this period, not the least pleasant were the friendly gatherings in 30 Abercromby Place, the town house of Dr. James Russell. They were given fortnightly after the meetings of the Royal Society during the Session. Dr. Russell died in 1836. — D. D.]

[2] Mr. Mackenzie had been consulting Sir Walter about collecting his own juvenile poetry.

pany with anecdotes and fun. Sometimes his daughter tells me he is in low spirits at home, but really I never see anything of it in society.

There is a maxim almost universal in Scotland, which I should like much to see controlled. Every youth, of every temper and almost every description of character, is sent either to study for the bar, or to a writer's office as an apprentice. The Scottish seem to conceive Themis the most powerful of goddesses. Is a lad stupid, the law will sharpen him; — is he mercurial, the law will make him sedate; — has he an estate, he may get a sheriffdom; — is he poor, the richest lawyers have emerged from poverty; — is he a Tory, he may become a depute-advocate; — is he a Whig, he may with far better hope expect to become, in reputation at least, that rising counsel Mr. ——, when in fact he only rises at tavern dinners. Upon some such wild views, advocates and writers multiply till there is no life for them, and men give up the chase, hopeless and exhausted, and go into the army at five-and-twenty, instead of eighteen, with a turn for expense perhaps — almost certainly for profligacy, and with a heart embittered against the loving parents or friends who compelled them to lose six or seven years in dusting the rails of the stair with their black gowns, or scribbling nonsense for twopence a page all day, and laying out twice their earnings at night in whiskey-punch. Here is [R.] L. now. Four or five years ago, from certain indications, I assured his friends he would never be a writer. Good-natured lad, too, when Bacchus is out of the question; but at other times so pugnacious, that it was wished he could only be properly placed where fighting was to be a part of his duty, regulated by time and place, and paid for accordingly. Well, time and instruction have been thrown away, and now, after fighting two regular boxing-matches and a duel with pistols in the course of one week, he tells them roundly he will be no writer, which common-sense might have

told them before. He has now perhaps acquired habits of insubordination, unfitting him for the army, where he might have been tamed at an earlier period. He is too old for the navy, and so he must go to India, a guinea-pig on board a Chinaman, with what hope or view it is melancholy to guess. His elder brother did all man could to get his friends to consent to his going into the army in time. The lad has good-humor, courage, and most gentlemanlike feelings, but he is incurably dissipated, I fear; so goes to die in a foreign land. Thank God, I let Walter take his own way; and I trust he will be a useful, honored soldier, being, for his time, high in the service; whereas at home he would probably have been a wine-bibbing, moorfowl-shooting, fox-hunting Fife squire — living at Lochore without either aim or end — and well if he were no worse. Dined at home with Lady S. and Anne. Wrote in the evening.

December 7. — Teind day — at home of course. Wrote answers to one or two letters which have been lying on my desk like snakes, hissing at me for my dilatoriness. Received a letter from Sir W. Knighton, mentioning that the King acquiesced in my proposal that Constable's Miscellany should be dedicated to him. Enjoined, however, not to make this public, till the draft of dedication shall be approved. This letter tarried so long, I thought some one had insinuated the proposal was *infra dig.* I don't think so. The purpose is to bring all the standard works, both in sciences and the liberal arts, within the reach of the lower classes, and enable them thus to use with advantage the education which is given them at every hand. To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve. Sir William, it seems, has been in Germany.

Mighty dark this morning: it is past ten, and I am using my lamp. The vast number of houses built beneath us to the north certainly renders our street darker during the days in which frost or haze prevents the smoke from rising. After all, it may be my older eyes. I remember two years ago, when Lord Hermand began to fail somewhat in his limbs, he observed that Lord Succoth came to court at a more early hour than usual, whereas it was he himself who took longer time to walk the usual distance betwixt his house and the Parliament Square. I suspect old gentlemen often make these mistakes.

Dined quiet with Lady S. and Anne. Anne is practising Scots songs, which I take as a kind compliment to my own taste, as hers leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and always have made, the most pleasing impression on me. And so if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say, in requital, God bless her.

I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife — and of good hopes in his profession; — my second, with a good deal of talent, and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose; — Anne, an honest, downright good Scots lass, in whom I could only wish to correct a spirit of satire; — and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him, and whom he has chosen. But my dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes is, I fear, frail in health — though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on — it bodes no long existence. My brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. The poor Major had been rather a free liver. But my father, the most abstemious of men, save when

the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness of the powers of retention which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night Sir Walter about sixty. — I care not, if I leave my name unstained, and my family properly settled — *Sat est vixisse.*

December 8. — Talking of the *vixisse*, it may not be impertinent to notice that Knox, a young poet of considerable talent, died here a week or two since. His father was a respectable yeoman, and he himself, succeeding to good farms under the Duke of Buccleuch, became too soon his own master, and plunged into dissipation and ruin. His talent then showed itself in a fine strain of pensive poetry, called, I think, "The Lonely Hearth,"[1] far superior to that of Michael Bruce, whose *consumption*, by the way, has been the *life* of his verses. But poetry, nay good poetry, is a drug in the present day. I am a wretched patron — I cannot go about with a subscription paper, like a pocket-pistol, and draw unawares on some honest country-gentleman, who has as much alarm as if I had used the phrase "stand and deliver," and parts with his money with a grimace, indicating some suspicion that the crown-piece thus levied goes ultimately into the collector's own pocket. This I see daily done; and I have seen such collectors, when they have exhausted papa and mamma, continue their trade among the misses, and conjure out of their pockets their little funds which should carry them to a play or an assembly. It is well people will go through this — it does some good, I suppose, and they have great merit who can sacrifice their pride so far as to attempt it in this way. For my part

[1] William Knox died 12th November. He had published *Songs of Israel*, 1824; *A Visit to Dublin*, 1824; *The Harp of Zion*, 1825, etc.; besides *The Lonely Hearth*. His publisher (Mr. Anderson, junior, of Edinburgh) remembers that Sir Walter occasionally wrote to Knox and sent him money — £10 at a time.

I am a bad promoter of subscriptions; but I wished to do what I could for this lad, whose talent I really admired; and I am not addicted to admire heaven-born poets, or poetry that is reckoned very good *considering*. I had him, Knox, at Abbotsford, about ten years ago, but found him unfit for that sort of society. I tried to help him, but there were temptations he could never resist. He scrambled on writing for the booksellers and magazines, and living like the Otways, and Savages, and Chattertons, of former days, though I do not know that he was in extreme want. His connection with me terminated in begging a subscription or a guinea, now and then. His last works were spiritual hymns, and which he wrote very well. In his own line of society he was said to exhibit infinite humor; but all his works are grave and pensive — a style, perhaps, like Master Stephen's melancholy, affected for the nonce.

Mrs. Grant intimates that she will take her pudding — her pension, I mean (see 30th November), and is contrite, as Henry Mackenzie vouches. I am glad the stout old girl is not foreclosed, faith. Cabbing a pension in these times is like hunting a pig with a soap'd tail, monstrous apt to slip through your fingers.

December 9. — Yesterday I read and wrote the whole day and evening. To-day I shall not be so happy. Having Gas-Light Company to attend at two, I must be brief in journalizing.

The gay world has been kept in hot water lately by the impudent publication of the celebrated Harriet Wilson — who, punk from earliest possibility, I suppose, has lived with half the gay world at hack and manger, and now obliges such as will not pay hush-money with a history of whatever she knows or can invent about them. She must have been assisted in the style, spelling, and diction, though the attempt at wit is very poor, that at pathos sickening. But there is some good retailing of

conversations, in which the style of the speakers, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated, and some things told, as said by individuals of each other, which will sound unpleasantly in each other's ears. I admire the address of Lord A——[y], himself very sorrily handled from time to time. Some one asked him if H. W. had been pretty correct on the whole. "Why, faith," he replied, "I believe so" — when, raising his eyes, he saw Q[uentin] D[ick], whom the little jilt had treated atrociously — "what concerns the present company always excepted, you know," added Lord A——[y], with infinite presence of mind. As he was in *pari casu* with Q. D., no more could be said. After all, H. W. beats Con Philips, Anne Bellamy, and all former demireps, out and out. I think I supped once in her company, more than twenty years since, at Mat Lewis's in Argyle Street, where the company, as the Duke says to Lucio, chanced to be "fairer than honest."[1] She was far from beautiful, if it be the same *chiffonne*, but a smart saucy girl, with good eyes and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy. I am glad this accidental meeting has escaped her memory — or, perhaps, is not accurately recorded in mine — for being a sort of French falconer, who hawk at all they see, I might have had a distinction which I am far from desiring.

Dined at Sir John Hay's — a large party. In the morning a meeting of Oil-Gas Committee. The concern hangs a little;

> "It may do weel, for aught it 's done yet,
> But only — it 's no just begun yet."[2]

December 10. — A stormy and rainy day. — Walk it from the Court through the rain. I don't dislike this. Egad, I rather like it; for no man that ever stepped on heather has less dread than I of the catch cold; and I

[1] *Measure for Measure*, Act IV. Scene 3.
[2] Burns's *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.*

seem to regain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which, in younger days, I used to enjoy a Tam o' Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain, the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did.

> "The storm around might roar and rustle,
> We did na mind the storm a whistle."

Answered two letters: one, answer to a schoolboy, who writes himself Captain of Giggleswick School (a most imposing title), entreating the youngster not to commence editor of a magazine to be entitled the Yorkshire Muffin, I think, at seventeen years old — second, to a soldier of the 79th, showing why I cannot oblige him by getting his discharge, and exhorting him rather to bear with the wickedness and profanity of the service, than take the very precarious step of desertion. This is the old receipt of Durandarte — *Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards;* and I suppose the correspondents will think I have been too busy in offering my counsel where I was asked for assistance.

A third rogue writes to tell me — rather of the latest, if the matter was of consequence — that he approves of the first three volumes of The Heart of Mid-Lothian, but totally condemns the fourth. Doubtless he thinks his opinion worth the sevenpence sterling which his letter costs. However, an author should be reasonably well pleased when three fourths of his work are acceptable to the reader. The knave demands of me, in a postscript, to get back the sword of Sir William Wallace from England, where it was carried from Dumbarton Castle. I am not Master-General of the Ordnance, that I know. It was wrong, however, to take away that and Mons Meg. If I go to London this spring, I will renew my negotiation with the Great Duke for recovery of Mons Meg.

There is nothing more awful than to attempt to cast

a glance among the clouds and mists which hide the broken extremity of the celebrated bridge of Mirza.[1] Yet, when every day brings us nigher that termination, one would almost think our views should become clearer. Alas, it is not so: there is a curtain to be withdrawn, a veil to be rent, before we shall see things as they really are. There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of a God; nay, I doubt if at all times, and in all moods, any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed, though some have professed it. With the belief of a Deity, that of the immortality of the soul and of the state of future rewards and punishments is indissolubly linked. More we are not to know; but neither are we prohibited from all attempts, however vain, to pierce the solemn sacred gloom. The expressions used in Scripture are doubtless metaphorical, — for penal fires and heavenly melody are only applicable to beings endowed with corporeal senses; and, at least till the period of the resurrection, the spirits of men, whether entering into the perfection of the just, or committed to the regions of punishment, are not connected with bodies. Neither is it to be supposed that the glorified bodies which shall arise in the last day will be capable of the same gross indulgences with which ours are now solaced. That the idea of Mahomet's paradise is inconsistent with the purity of our heavenly religion will be readily granted; and see Mark xii. 25. Harmony is obviously chosen as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense, and as the type of love, unity, and a state of peace and perfect happiness. But they have a poor idea of the Deity, and the rewards which are destined for the just made perfect, who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert — a never-ending birthday ode. I rather suppose this should be understood as some commission from the Highest, some duty to discharge with the applause of a satisfied conscience. That the Deity, who himself must be

[1] *Spectator*, No. 159.

supposed to feel love and affection for the beings he has called into existence, should delegate a portion of those powers, I for one cannot conceive altogether so wrong a conjecture. We would then find reality in Milton's sublime machinery of the guardian saints or genii of kingdoms. Nay, we would approach to the Catholic idea of the employment of saints, though without approaching the absurdity of saint-worship, which degrades their religion. There would be, we must suppose, in these employments difficulties to overcome, and exertions to be made, for all which the celestial beings employed would have certain appropriate powers. I cannot help owning that a life of active benevolence is more consistent with my ideas than an eternity of music. But it is all speculation, and it is impossible to guess what we shall do, unless we could ascertain the equally difficult previous question, what we are to be. But there is a God, and a just God — a judgment and a future life — and all who own so much, let them act according to the faith that is in them. I would not, of course, limit the range of my genii to this confined earth. There is the universe, with all its endless extent of worlds.

Company at home — Sir Adam Ferguson and his Lady; Colonel and Miss Russell; Count Davidoff, and Mr. Collyer. By the bye, I observe that all men whose names are obviously derived from some mechanical trade, endeavor to disguise and antiquate, as it were, their names, by spelling them after some quaint manner or other. Thus we have Collyer, Smythe, Tailleure; as much as to say, my ancestor was indeed a mechanic, but it was a world of time ago, when the word was spelled very unlike the modern usage. — Then we had young Whitebank and Will Allan the artist, a very agreeable, simple-mannered, and pleasant man.

December 11. — A touch of the *morbus eruditorum*, to which I am as little subject as most folks, and have it

less now than when young. It is a tremor of the head, the pulsation of which becomes painfully sensible — a disposition to causeless alarm — much lassitude — and decay of vigor and activity of intellect. The reins feel weary and painful, and the mind is apt to receive and encourage gloomy apprehensions. Fighting with this fiend is not always the best way to conquer him. I have found exercise and the open air better than reasoning. But such weather as is now without doors does not encourage *la petite guerre*, so we must give him battle in form, by letting both mind and body know that, supposing one the House of Commons and the other the House of Peers, my will is sovereign over both. There is a fine description of this species of mental weakness in the fine play of Beaumont and Fletcher, called The Lover's Progress, where the man, warned that his death is approaching, works himself into an agony of fear, and calls for assistance, though there is no apparent danger. The apparition of the innkeeper's ghost, in the same play, hovers between the ludicrous and the terrible; and to me the touches of the former quality which it contains seem to augment the effect of the latter — they seem to give reality to the supernatural, as being a circumstance with which an inventor would hardly have garnished his story.

December 12. — Hogg came to breakfast this morning, and brought for his companion the Galashiels bard, David Thomson,[1] as to a meeting of *huz Tividale poets*. The honest grunter opines, with a delightful *naïveté*, that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet — answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung. "They are far owre finely strung," replied he of the Forest, "for mine are just right." It reminded me of Queen Bess, when questioning Melville sharply and closely whether Mary was taller than her, and extracting an answer in the affirmative, she replied, —

[1] See *ante*, vol. vii. p. 67.

"Then your Queen is too tall, for I am just the proper height."

Was engaged the whole day with Sheriff-court processes. There is something sickening in seeing poor devils drawn into great expenses about trifles by interested attorneys. But too cheap access to litigation has its evils on the other hand, for the proneness of the lower class to gratify spite and revenge in this way would be a dreadful evil were they able to endure the expense. Very few cases come before the Sheriff-court of Selkirkshire that ought to come anywhere. Wretched wranglings about a few pounds, begun in spleen, and carried on from obstinacy, and at length, from fear of the conclusion to the banquet of ill-humor, "D—n—n of expenses."[1] I try to check it as well as I can; "but so 't will be when I am gone."

December 12. — Dined at home, and spent the evening in writing — Anne and Lady Scott at the theatre to see Mathews; — a very clever man my friend Mathews; but it is tiresome to be funny for a whole evening, so I was content and stupid at home.

An odd optical delusion has amused me these two last nights. I have been of late, for the first time, condemned to the constant use of spectacles. Now, when I have laid them aside to step into a room dimly lighted, out of the strong light which I use for writing, I have seen, or seemed to see, through the rims of the same spectacles which I have left behind me. At first the impression was so lively, that I put my hands to my eyes, believing I had the actual spectacles on at the moment. But what I saw was only the eidolon or image of said useful servants. This fortifies some of Dr. Hibbert's positions about spectral appearances.

December 13. — Letter from Lady Stafford — kind

[1] Burns's *Address to the Unco Guid.*

and friendly, after the wont of Banzu-Mohr-ar-chat.[1] This is wrong spelled, I know. Her countenance is something for Sophia, whose company should be, as ladies are said to choose their liquor — little and good. To be acquainted with persons of mere *ton* is a nuisance and a scrape — to be known to persons of real fashion and fortune is in London a very great advantage. In London, second-rate fashion is like false jewels.

Went to the yearly court of the Edinburgh Assurance Company, to which I am one of those graceful and useless appendages, called Directors Extraordinary — an extraordinary director I should prove, had they elected me an ordinary one. There were there moneyers and great oneyers,[2] men of metal — counters and discounters — sharp, grim, prudential faces — eyes weak with ciphering by lamp-light — men who say to gold, Be thou paper, and to paper, Be thou turned into fine gold. Many a bustling, sharp-faced, keen-eyed writer too — some perhaps speculating with their clients' property. My reverend seigniors had expected a motion for printing their contract, which I, as a piece of light artillery, was brought down and got into battery to oppose. I should certainly have done this on the general ground, that while each person could at any time obtain sight of the contract at a call on the directors or managers, it would be absurd to print it for the use of the company — and that exposing it to the eyes of the world at large was in all respects unnecessary, and might teach novel companies to avail themselves of our rules and calculations — if false, for the purpose of exposing our errors — if correct, for the purpose of improving their own schemes on our

[1] *Banamhorar-Chat, i. e.*, the Great Lady of the Cat, is the Gaelic title of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. The County of Sutherland itself is in that dialect *Cattey*, and in the English name of the neighboring one, *Caithness*, we have another trace of the early settlement of the *Clan Chattan;* whose chiefs bear the cognizance of a Wild Cat. (The Duchess-Countess died in 1838.)

[2] See *1st King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene 1.

model. But my eloquence was not required, no one renewing the motion under question; so off I came, my ears still ringing with the sounds of thousands and tens of thousands, and my eyes dazzled with the golden gleam offered by so many capitalists.

Walked home with the Solicitor[1] — decidedly the most hopeful young man of his time; high connections, great talent, spirited ambition, a ready elocution, with a good voice and dignified manners, prompt and steady courage, vigilant and constant assiduity, popularity with the young men, and the good opinion of the old, will, if I mistake not, carry him as high as any man who has arisen here since the days of old Hal Dundas.[2] He is hot though, and rather hasty: this should be amended. They who would play at single-stick must bear with pleasure a rap over the knuckles. Dined quietly with Lady Scott and Anne.

December 14. — Affairs very bad again in the money-market in London. It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it. To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage-contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder. I do not know why it is — this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat. But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash, shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing.

[1] John Hope, Esq. (now Dean of the Faculty of Advocates), was at this time Solicitor-General for Scotland. [He was Lord Justice-Clerk from 1841 till his death in 1858.]

[2] Henry Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, first appeared in Parliament as Lord Advocate of Scotland.

December 15. — Dined at home with family. I am determined not to stand mine host to all Scotland and England as I have done.[1] This shall be a saving, as it must be a borrowing year. We heard from Sophia; they are got safe to town; but as Johnnie had a little bag of meal with him, to make his porridge on the road, the whole inn-yard assembled to see the operation. Junor, his maid, was of opinion that England was an "awfu' country to make parritch in." God bless the poor baby, and restore his perfect health!

December 16. — [R. P. G.] and his friend Robert Wilson[2] came — the former at five, as usual — the latter at three, as appointed. Robert Wilson frankly said that [R. P. G.'s] case was quite desperate, that he was insolvent, and that any attempt to save him at present would be just so much cash thrown away. God knows, at this moment I have none to throw away uselessly. For poor [Gillies], there was a melancholy mixture of pathos and affectation in his statement, which really affected me; while it told me that it would be useless to help him to money on such very empty plans. I endeavored to persuade him to make a virtue of necessity, resign all to his creditors, and begin the world on a new leaf. I offered him Chiefswood for a temporary retirement. Lady Scott thinks I was wrong, and nobody could less desire such a neighbor, all his affectations being *caviare* to me. But then the wife and children! — Went again to the Solicitor on a wrong night, being asked for tomorrow. Lady Scott undertakes to keep my engagements recorded in future. *Sed quis custodiet ipsam custodem?*

[1] ["Talking with the guard" (of the Jedburgh coach) "about Abbotsford, he told me Lady Scott had said that 'it was quite a hotel in everything but pay.'" — *Moore's Diary*, November 2, 1825.]

[2] Robert Sym Wilson, Esq., W. S., Secretary to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

December 17. — Dined with the Solicitor — Lord Chief-Baron — Sir William Boothby, nephew of old Sir Brooke, the dandy poet, etc. Annoyed with anxious presentiments, which the night's post must dispel or confirm.

December 18. — Poor [Gillies] called again yesterday. Through his incoherent, miserable tale, I could see that he had exhausted each access to credit, and yet fondly imagines that, bereft of all his accustomed indulgences, he can work with a literary zeal unknown to his happier days. I hope he may labor enough to gain the mere support of his family. For myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs, and purchasing such wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

> "Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
> Places which pale passion loves."

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i. e.*, write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least I much doubt the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation: —

> "While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
> The high-mettled racer 's a hack on the road."

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

What a life mine has been! — half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head

with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer; broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again — but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come), because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.

Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me — that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest? — how live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy — the honored? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish — but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seek-

ing me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me — When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, "Poor gentleman" — "a well-meaning man" — "nobody's enemy but his own" — "thought his parts would never wear out" — "family poorly left" — "pity he took that foolish title." Who can answer this question?

Poor Will Laidlaw — poor Tom Purdie — such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all — all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They* — alas, who will *they* be — the *unbekannten obern*[1] who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker — some of these men of millions whom I described.

I have endeavored to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes — partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell — but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.

[1] *Unbekannten obern* — unknown rulers.

Oddly enough, it happened mine honest friend Hector Macdonald came in before dinner, to ask a copy of my seal of arms, with a sly kindliness of intimation that it was for some agreeable purpose. *Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honorably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm.

I shall always think the better of Cadell for this — not merely because "his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings,"[1] but because he showed feeling — deep feeling, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon — I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men — the others' are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket-handkerchief.

December 19. — Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

December 20. — Dined at Lord Chief-Baron's. Lord Justice-Clerk; Lord President;[2] Captain Scarlett, a gentlemanlike young man, the son of the great Counsellor,[3] and a friend of my son Walter; Lady Charlotte Hope and other womankind; R. Dundas of Arniston, and his pleasant and good-humored little wife, whose quick, intel-

[1] Isaiah lii. 7.

[2] [The Right Hon. Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session for thirty years.]

[3] Mr. Scarlett, now Lord Abinger.

ligent look pleases me more, though her face be plain, than a hundred mechanical beauties. I like Ch.-Ba. Shepherd very much — as much, I think, as any man I have learned to know of late years. There is a neatness and precision, a closeness and truth in the tone of his conversation, which shows what a lawyer he must have been. Perfect good-humor and *naïveté* of manner, with a little warmth of temper on suitable occasions. His great deafness alone prevented him from being Lord Chief-Justice. I never saw a man so patient under such a malady. He loves society, and converses excellently, yet is often obliged, in a mixed company particularly, to lay aside his trumpet, retire into himself, and withdraw from the talk. He does this with an expression of patience in his countenance which touches one much. Constable's license for the Dedication is come, which will make him happy.[1]

December 21. — Dined with James Ballantyne, and met my old friend Mathews, the comedian, with his son, now grown up a clever, rather forward lad, who makes songs in the style of James Smith or Colman, and sings them with spirit. There have been odd associations attending my two last meetings with Mathews. The last time I saw him before yesterday evening, he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week.[2] I never saw Sir Alexander more. The time before was in 1815, when John Scott of Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down

[1] The Dedication of Constable's *Miscellany* was penned by Sir Walter: "To His Majesty King George IV., the most generous Patron even of the most humble attempts towards the advantage of his subjects, This Miscellany, designed to extend useful knowledge and elegant literature, by placing works of standard merit within the attainment of every class of Readers, is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's dutiful and devoted subject — Archibald Constable."

[2] See *ante*, vol. vi. p. 319, vol. vii. p. 23.

as far as Leamington. Poor Byron lunched, or rather made an early dinner with us at Long's, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim: he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw him again.[1] So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I like better that he should throw in his talent of mimicry and humor into the present current tone of the company, than that he should be required to give this, that, and t'other *bit* selected from his public recitations. They are good certainly — excellent; but then you *must* laugh, and that is always severe to me. When I do laugh in sincerity, the joke must be or seem unpremeditated. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company, Cadell, J. B., and the Journalist. What a strange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds!

> "No eyes the rocks discover
> Which lurk beneath the deep."

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

December 22. — I wrote six of my close pages yesterday, which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more, I think it comes off twangingly. The story is so very interesting in itself, that there is no fear of the book answering.[2] Superficial it must be, but I do not care for the charge. Better a superficial book which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see farther into a millstone at every moment than the nature of the millstone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a *minute philosopher*, a botanist, or pebble-gatherer, who

[1] See *ante*, vol. v. pp. 30, 64.

[2] *Life of Napoleon.*

is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture to look at grasses and chucky-stones. Yet, in their way, they give useful information; and so does the minute historian. Gad, I think that will look well in the preface. My bile is quite gone; I really believe it arose from mere anxiety. What a wonderful connection between the mind and body!

The air of Bonnie Dundee running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688–89.[1] I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big Bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

Dined at Lord Minto's. There were Lord and Lady Ruthven, William Clerk, and Thomas Thomson, — a right choice party. There was also my very old friend Mrs. Brydone, the relict of the traveller, and daughter of Principal Robertson, and really worthy of such a connection — Lady Minto, who is also peculiarly agreeable — and her sister, Mrs. Admiral Adam, in the evening.

December 23. — Lord Minto's father, the first Earl, was a man among a thousand. I knew him very, very intimately in the beginning of the century, and, which was very agreeable, was much at his house on very easy terms. He loved the Muses, and worshipped them in secret, and used to read some of his poetry, which was but middling. [Tom Campbell lived at Minto, but it was in a state of dependence, which he brooked very ill. He was kindly treated, but would not see it in the right

[1] See Scott's *Poetical Works*, vol. xii. p. 194 [Cambridge Ed. p. 485].

view, and suspected slights and so on, where no such thing was meant. There was a turn of Savage about Tom, though without his blackguardism — a kind of waywardness of mind and irritability that must have made a man of his genius truly unhappy.] With the mildest manners, he was very tenacious of his opinions, although he changed them twice in the crises of politics. He was the early friend of Fox, and made a figure towards the end of the American war, or during the struggles betwixt Fox and Pitt. Then came the Revolution, and he joined the Anti-Gallican party so keenly, that he declared against Addington's peace with France, and was for a time, I believe, a Wyndhamite. He was reconciled to the Whigs on the Fox and Grenville coalition; but I have heard that Fox, contrary to his wont, retained such personal feelings as made him object to Sir Gilbert Elliot's having a seat in the Cabinet; so he was sent Governor-General to India — a better thing, I take it, for his fortunes. He died shortly after his return,[1] on his way down to his native country. He was a most pleasing and amiable man. I was very sorry for his death, though I do not know how we should have met, for a contested election in Roxburghshire had placed some coldness betwixt the present Lord and me. I was certainly anxious for Sir Alexander Don, both as friend of my most kind friend Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, and on political accounts; and those thwartings are what men in public life do not like to endure. After a cessation of friendship for some years, we have now come about again. We never had the slightest personal dispute or disagreement. But politics are the blowpipe beneath whose influence the best cemented friendships diffuse; and ours, after all, was only a very familiar acquaintance.

It is very odd that the common people about Minto and the neighborhood will not believe at this hour that

[1] Gilbert, Earl of Minto, died in June, 1814.

the first Earl is dead. They think he had done something in India which he could not answer for — that the house was rebuilt on a scale unusually large to give him a suite of secret apartments, and that he often walks about the woods and crags of Minto at night, with a white nightcap and long white beard. The circumstance of his having died on the road down to Scotland is the sole foundation of this absurd legend, which shows how willing the public are to gull themselves when they can find no one else to take the trouble. I have seen people who could read, write, and cipher, shrug their shoulders and look mysterious when this subject was mentioned. One very absurd addition was made on occasion of a great ball at Minto House, which it was said was given to draw all people away from the grounds, that the concealed Earl might have leisure for his exercise. This was on the principle in the German Play,[1] where, to hide their conspiracy, the associates join in a chorus song.

We dined at home; Mr. Davidoff and his tutor kept an engagement with us to dinner, notwithstanding the death of the Emperor Alexander. They went to the play with the womankind; I stayed at home to write.

December 24. — Wrote to Walter and Jane, and gave the former an account of how things had been in the money market. Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of Waverley in a superior style, at £1, 1*s.* volume. He says he will answer for making £20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing — besides the Printing-Office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in. His rally has put me in mind of the old song, —

[1] See Canning's *German Play*, in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

"The tailor raise and shook his duds,
He gar'd the BILLS flee aff in cluds,
And they that stayed gat fearfu' thuds —
The tailor proved a man, O."

We are for Abbotsford to-day, with a light heart.

December 25, *Abbotsford.* — Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful — *Barbarus has segetes? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.* There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come — *il faut cultiver notre jardin.*[1] Let us see, I shall write out the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee. I will sketch a preface to La Rochejacquelin for Constable's Miscellany, and try about a specimen of notes for the Waverley Novels. Together with letters and by-business, it will be a good day's work.

"I make a vow,
And keep it true."

I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas Day. On this day of general devotion I have a particular call for gratitude!!

[1] See *Candide.*

CHAPTER LXVI

CONSTABLE IN LONDON. — EXTRACT FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDUM. — SCOTT'S DIARY RESUMED. — PROGRESS OF WOODSTOCK. — REVIEW OF PEPYS'S DIARY. — SKENE, SCROPE, MATHEWS, ETC. — COMMERCIAL ALARMS RENEWED AT INTERVALS. — CATASTROPHE OF THE THREE HOUSES OF HURST AND ROBINSON, CONSTABLE, AND BALLANTYNE

1826

It was not till nearly three weeks after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph of his Diary, that Mr. Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi — *reluctantem draconem*. A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I, for the first time, saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar*. He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted — open rebellion in twenty provinces — confusion in the capital — treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before

heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment, to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his;* he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man[1] who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the Encyclopædia Britannica, with its supplement, a moiety of the Edinburgh Review, nearly

[1] On seeing the passage in the text, Mr. Constable's surviving partner writes as follows: "No better illustration of this buoyant idea of the value of literary property is to be found than in the now well-ascertained fact of Constable himself, in 1811, over-estimating his partner, Mr. Hunter, *out* of the concern at the Cross to the tune of some £10,000 or £12,000 — a blow from which the firm never recovered. — R. C."

all Scott's Poetry, the Waverley Novels, and the advancing Life of Napoleon — who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten — and who seriously viewed his plan of the new Miscellany as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune, — what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry "sheafs" of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the Author of Waverley) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter had, ere the message reached him, been made aware that his advances had already been continued in the absence of all ground for rational hope.

It is no business of mine to detail Constable's subsequent proceedings on this his last visit to London. Everywhere he found distrust. The metropolitan bankers had enough on their hands at a time when, as Mr. Huskisson afterwards confessed in Parliament, the Bank

of England itself was on the verge of a stoppage, without embarrassing themselves with new securities of the uncertain and precarious nature of literary property. The great bookselling houses were all either laboring themselves, or watching with fear and trembling the daily aggravated symptoms of distress among their friends and connections. Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

Before that day came, I had necessarily been informed of the nature of Scott's connection with commercial speculations; but I had not been prepared for the amount to which Constable's ruin must involve him, until the final blow was struck.

I believe I have now said enough by way of preface to Sir Walter's Diary from Christmas, 1825, to the latter part of January, 1826, when my darkest anticipations were more than realized. But before I return to this Diary, it may be well to transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's deathbed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says, in that most candid paper: —

"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say, that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far — 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending — if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed." [1]

DIARY

Abbotsford, December 26, 1825. — My God! what poor creatures we are! After all my fair proposals yesterday, I was seized with a most violent pain in the right kidney and parts adjacent, which forced me instantly to go to bed and send for Clarkson.[2] He came, inquired, and pronounced the complaint to be gravel augmented by bile. I was in great agony till about two o'clock, but awoke with the pain gone. I got up, had a fire in my dressing-closet, and had Dalgleish to shave me — two trifles, which I only mention, because they are contrary to my hardy and independent personal habits. But although a man cannot be a hero to his valet, his valet in sickness becomes of great use to him. I cannot expect that the first will be the last visit of this cruel complaint: but "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?" [3]

December 27. — Slept twelve hours at a stretch, being much exhausted. Totally without pain to-day,

[1] [An admirably lucid account of the origin and growth of Scott's business entanglements — an account quite free from the technicalities which might perplex the unlearned in such matters — can be found in Mr. Leslie Stephen's *The Story of Scott's Ruin*, a paper resulting from the writer's review of the various aspects of the subject, while preparing his sketch of Scott for the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The article, first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for April, 1897, is contained in *Studies of a Biographer* (1898), vol. ii.]

[2] James Clarkson, Esq., Surgeon, Melrose, son to Scott's old friend, Dr. Clarkson of Selkirk.

[3] Job ii. 10.

but uncomfortable from the effects of calomel, which, with me at least, is like the assistance of an auxiliary army, just one degree more tolerable than the enemy it chases away. Calomel contemplations are not worth recording. I wrote an introduction and a few notes to the Memoirs of Madame La Rochejacquelin,[1] being all that I was equal to. Sir Adam Ferguson came over and tried to marry my verses to the tune of Bonnie Dundee. They seem well adapted to each other. Dined with Lady Scott and Anne. Worked at Pepys in the evening, with the purpose of review for Quarterly.[2] Notwithstanding the depressing effects of the calomel, I feel the pleasure of being alone and uninterrupted. Few men, leading a quiet life, and without any strong or highly varied change of circumstances, have seen more variety of society than I — few have enjoyed it more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification; and were I obliged to account for hints afforded on such occasions, I should make an ample deduction from my narrative powers. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors, and have often taken a bannock and a bit of cheese to the wood or hill, to avoid dining with company. As I grew from boyhood to manhood, I saw this would not do; and that to gain a place in men's esteem, I must mix and bustle with them. Pride, and an exaltation of spirits, often supplied the real pleasure which others seem to feel in society; yet mine certainly upon many occasions was real. Still, if the question was, eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or solitary confinement for life, I should say, "Turnkey, lock the cell!" My life, though not

[1] See Constable's *Miscellany*, vol. v.

[2] See the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1826, — or Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose* (Edin. Ed.), vol. xx.

without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

"Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy." [1]

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realized. Somewhere it is said that this castle-building — this wielding of the unreal trowel, is fatal to exertions in actual life. I cannot tell — I have not found it so. I cannot, indeed, say, like Madame Genlis, that in the imaginary scenes in which I have acted a part, I ever prepared myself for anything which actually befell me; but I have certainly fashioned out much that made the present hour pass pleasantly away, and much that has enabled me to contribute to the amusement of the public. Since I was five years old, I cannot remember the time when I had not some ideal part to play for my own solitary amusement.

December 28. — Somehow I think the attack on Christmas Day has been of a critical kind; and having gone off so well, may be productive rather of health than continued indisposition. If one is to get a renewal of health in his fifty-fourth year, he must look to pay fine for it. Last night George Thomson came to see how I was, poor fellow. He has talent, is well informed, and has an excellent heart; but there is great eccentricity about him. I wish to God I saw him provided in a country kirk. That, with a rational wife, would, I think, bring him to a steady temper; at present he is between the tyning and the winning. If I could get him to set to any hard study, he would do something clever.

How to make a critic. — A sly rogue, sheltering himself under the generic name of Mr. Campbell, requested of me, through the penny-post, the loan of £50 for two

[1] *As You Like It*, Act IV. Scene 3.

years, having an impulse, as he said, to make this demand. As I felt no corresponding impulse, I begged to decline a demand which might have been as reasonably made by any Campbell on earth; and another impulse has determined the man of fifty pounds to send me anonymous abuse of my works, and temper, and selfish disposition. The severity of the joke lies in 14*d.* for postage, to avoid which, his next epistle shall go back to the clerks of the Post-Office, as not for Sir W—— S——. How the severe rogue would be disappointed, if he knew I never looked at more than the first and last lines of his satirical effusion! When I first saw that a literary profession was to be my fate, I endeavored by all efforts of stoicism to divest myself of that irritable degree of sensibility — or, to speak plainly, of vanity — which makes the poetical race miserable and ridiculous. The anxiety of a poet for praise and for compliments I have always endeavored to keep down.

December 29. — Base feelings this same calomel gives one — mean, poor, and abject — a *wretch*, as Will Rose says.

> "Fie fie on silly coward man,
> That he should be the slave o't." [1]

Then it makes one "woefully dogged and snappish," as Dr. Rutty the Quaker [2] says in his *Gurnal*. — Must go to Woodstock, yet am vexed by that humor of contradiction which makes me incline to do anything else in preference. Commenced preface for the new edition of my Novels. The City of Cork send my freedom in a silver box.

December 31. — Took a good sharp walk, the first time

[1] Burns.

[2] John Rutty, M. D., a physician of some eminence in Dublin, died in 1775, and his executors published his very curious and absurd *Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies*. Boswell describes Johnson as being much amused with the Quaker Doctor's minute confessions. See the *Life of Johnson, sub anno* 1777.

since my illness, and found myself the better in health and spirits. Being Hogmanay, there dined with us Colonel Russell and his sisters, Sir Adam Ferguson and Lady, Colonel Ferguson, with Mary and Margaret: an auld-world party, who made themselves happy in the auld fashion. I felt so tired about eleven, that I was forced to steal to bed.

January 1, 1826. — A year has passed — another has commenced. These divisions of time influence our feelings as they recur. Yet there is nothing in it; for every day in the year closes a twelvemonth as well as the 31st December. The latter is only the solemn pause, as when a guide, showing a wild and mountainous road, calls on a party to look back at the scenes which they have just passed. To me this new year opens sadly. There are these troublesome pecuniary difficulties, which, however, I think this week should end. There is the absence of all my children, Anne excepted, from our little family festival. There is, besides, that ugly report of the 15th Hussars going to India. Walter, I suppose, will have some step in view, and will go, and I fear Jane will not dissuade him. — A hard frosty day — cold, but dry and pleasant under foot. Walked into the plantations with Anne and Anne Russell. A thought strikes me, alluding to this period of the year. People say that the whole human frame, in all its parts and divisions, is gradually in the act of decaying and renewing. What a curious time-piece it would be that could indicate to us the moment this gradual and insensible change had so completely taken place, that no atom was left of the original person who had existed at a certain period, but there existed in his stead another person having the same thews and sinews, the same face and lineaments, the same consciousness — a new ship built on an old plank — a pair of transmigrated stockings, like those of Sir John Cutler, all green, without one thread of the original

black silk left! Singular — to be at once another and the same!

January 2. — Weather clearing up in Edinburgh once more, and all will, I believe, do well. I am pressed to get on with Woodstock, and must try. I wish I could open a good vein of interest which would breathe freely. I must take my old way and write myself into good-humor with my task. It is only when I dally with what I am about, look back, and aside, instead of keeping my eyes straight forward, that I feel those cold sinkings of the heart. All men, I suppose, do so less or more. They are like the sensation of a sailor when the ship is cleared for action, and all are at their places — gloomy enough; but the first broadside puts all to rights. Dined at Huntly Burn with the Fergusons *en masse*.

January 3. — Promises a fair day, and I think the progress of my labors will afford me a little exercise. Walked with Colonel Russell from eleven till two, the first good day's exercise I have had since coming here. We went through all the Terrace, the Roman Planting,[1] over by the Stiel and Haxelcleugh, and so by the Rhymer's Glen to Chiefswood, which gave my heart a twinge, so disconsolate it seemed. Yet all is for the best. When I returned, signed a bond for £10,000, which will disencumber me of all pressing claims;[2] when I get forwards Woodstock and Nap. there will be £12,000 and upwards, and I hope to add £3000 against this time next year, or the devil must hold the dice. J. B. writes me seriously on the carelessness of my style. I did not think I had been more careless than usual; but I dare say he is right. I will be more cautious.

[1] This plantation now covers the remains of an old Roman road from the Great Camp on the Eildon hills to the ford below Scott's house.

[2] When settling his estate on his eldest son, Sir Walter had retained the power of burdening it with £10,000 for behoof of his younger children; he now raised the sum for the assistance of the struggling firms. See *ante*, p. 120.

January 4. — Despatched the deed executed yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Skene, my excellent friends, came to us from Edinburgh. Skene, distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman, and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character, is Laird of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen. Having had an elder brother, his education was somewhat neglected in early life, against which disadvantage he made a most gallant fight, exerting himself much to obtain those accomplishments which he has since possessed. Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character. Of late he has given himself much to the study of antiquities. His wife, a most excellent person, was tenderly fond of Sophia. They bring so much old-fashioned kindness and good-humor with them, besides the recollections of other times, that they must be always welcome guests. Letter from Mr. Scrope,[1] announcing a visit.

January 5. — Got the desired accommodation, which will put J. B. quite straight, but am a little anxious still about Constable. He has immense stock, to be sure, and most valuable, but he may have sacrifices to make to convert a large proportion of it into ready money. The accounts from London are most disastrous. Many wealthy persons totally ruined, and many, many more have been obliged to purchase their safety at a price they will feel all their lives. I do not hear things have been so bad in Edinburgh; and J. B.'s business has been transacted by the banks with liberality.

[1] William Scrope, Esq., of Lincolnshire — the representative of the Lords Scrope of Bolton (to whose peerage he is, I believe, entitled), was at this period much in Scotland, being a zealous angler and deer-stalker. He had a lease of Lord Somerville's pavilion opposite Melrose, and lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with Sir Walter Scott. There occurs in a subsequent entry an allusion to Mr. Scrope's eminence as an amateur artist. (Since these pages first appeared, Mr. Scrope's varied accomplishments have been displayed in the interesting and elegant volume, entitled *Art of Deer-Stalking* — Royal 8vo, London, 1839.) [He also published *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing*, in 1843. He died in 1852.]

Colonel Russell told us last night that the last of the Moguls, a descendant of Kubla Khan, though having no more power than his effigies at the back of a set of playing-cards, refused to meet Lord Hastings, because the Governor-General would not agree to remain standing in his presence. Pretty well for the blood of Timur in these degenerate days!

Much alarmed. I had walked till twelve with Skene and Russell, and then sat down to my work. To my horror and surprise I could neither write nor spell, but put down one word for another, and wrote nonsense. I was much overpowered at the same time, and could not conceive the reason. I fell asleep, however, in my chair, and slept for two hours. On my waking, my head was clearer, and I began to recollect that last night I had taken the anodyne left for the purpose by Clarkson, and, being disturbed in the course of the night, I had not slept it off. Obliged to give up writing to-day — read Pepys instead.

January 6. — This seems to be a feeding storm, coming on by little and little. Wrought all day, and dined quiet. My disorder is wearing off, and the quiet society of the Skenes suits my present humor. I really thought I was in for some very bad illness. Curious expression of an Indian-born boy just come from Bengal, a son of my cousin George Swinton. The child saw a hare run across the fields, and exclaimed, "See, there is a little tiger!"

January 7. — *Sunday.* — Knight, a young artist, son of the performer,[1] came to do a picture of me at the request of Terry. This is very far from being agreeable, as I submitted to that state of constraint last year to Newton, at request of Lockhart; to Leslie, at request of my American friend;[2] to Wilkie, for his picture of the

[1] [Edward Knight, comedian.]

[2] Sir Walter omits the name of his friend, — Mr. Ticknor of Boston, who possesses Mr. Leslie's portrait.

King's arrival at Holyrood House; and some one besides. I am as tired of the operation as old Maida, who had been so often sketched that he got up and walked off with signs of loathing whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper, and handle his brushes. But this young man is civil and modest; and I have agreed he shall be in the room while I work, and take the best likeness he can, without compelling me into the fixed attitude and yawning fatigues of an actual sitting.[1] I think, if he has talent, he may do more my way than in the customary mode; at least I can't have the hang-dog look which the unfortunate Theseus has who is doomed to sit for what seems an eternity.[2]

I wrought till two o'clock — indeed till I was almost nervous with correcting and scribbling. I then walked, or rather was dragged through the snow by Tom Purdie, while Skene accompanied. What a blessing there is in a fellow like Tom, whom no familiarity can spoil, whom you may scold and praise and joke with, knowing the quality of the man is unalterable in his love and reverence to his master. Use an ordinary servant in the same way, and he will be your master in a month. We should thank God for the snow as well as summer flowers. This brushing exercise has put all my nerves into tone again, which were really jarred with fatigue until my very backbone seemed breaking. This comes of trying to do too much. J. B.'s news are as good as possible. — Prudence, prudence, and all will do excellently.

January 8. — Frost and snow still. Write to excuse myself from attending the funeral of my aunt Mrs.

[1] [John Prescott Knight, later a portrait painter of some repute, was born in 1803. He became a Royal Academician in 1844, and died in 1881. He was an ardent follower of Edward Irving, and held high office in the Catholic Apostolic Church.]

[2] Sedet, æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus.
Virgil.

Curle, which takes place to-morrow at Kelso. She was a woman of the old Sandy-Knowe breed, with the strong sense, high principle, and indifferent temper which belonged to my father's family. She lived with great credit on a moderate income, and I believe gave away a great deal of it.[1]

January 9. — Mathews the comedian, and his son, come to spend a day at Abbotsford. Mr. Scrope also comes out.

January 10. — Bodily health, the mainspring of the microcosm, seems quite restored. No more flushing or nervous fits, but the sound mind in the sound body. What poor things does a fever-fit or an overflowing of bile make of the master of creation. The snow begins to fall thick this morning —

> "The landlord then aloud did say,
> As how he wished they would go away."

To have our friends shut up here would be rather too much of a good thing. The day cleared up, and was very pleasant. Had a good walk, and looked at the curling. Mr. Mathews made himself very amusing in the evening. He has the good-nature to show his accomplishments without pressing, and without the appearance of feeling pain. On the contrary, I dare say he enjoys the pleasure he communicates.

January 11. — I got proof sheets, in which it seems I have repeated a whole passage of history which had been told before. James is in an awful stew, and I cannot

[1] In a letter of this date, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, Sir Walter says: "Poor Aunt Curle died like a Roman, or rather like one of the Sandy-Knowe bairns, the most stoical race I ever knew. She turned every one out of the room, and drew her last breath alone. So did my uncle Captain Robert Scott, and several others of that family."

blame him; but then he should consider the *hyoscyamus* which I was taking, and the anxious botheration about the money-market. However, as Chaucer says: —

> "There is na workeman
> That can bothe worken wel and hastilie,
> This must be done at leasure parfaitly."

January 12. — Mathews last night gave us a very perfect imitation of Old Cumberland, who carried the poetic jealousy and irritability farther than any man I ever saw. He was a great flatterer, too, the old rogue. Will Erskine used to admire him. I think he wanted originality. A very high-bred man in point of manners in society. Upon the whole, the days pass pleasantly enough — work till one or two, then an hour or two hours' walk in the snow, then lighter work, or reading. Late dinner, and singing, or chat, in the evening. Mathews has really all the will, as well as the talent, to be amusing. He confirms my idea of ventriloquism (which is an absurd word), as being merely the art of imitating sounds at a greater or less distance, assisted by some little points of trick to influence the imagination of the audience — the vulgar idea of a peculiar organization (beyond fineness of ear and of utterance) is nonsense.

January 13. — Our party are about to disperse —

> "Like youthful steers unyoked, east, north, and south." [1]

I am not sorry, being one of those whom too much mirth always inclines to sadness. The missing so many of my own family, together with the serious inconveniences to which I have been exposed, give me at present a desire to be alone. The Skenes return to Edinburgh, so does Mr. Scrope — *item*, the little artist; Mathews to Newcastle; his son to Liverpool. So *exeunt omnes*.

Mathews assures me that Sheridan was generally very

[1] *2d King Henry IV.* Act IV. Scene 2.

dull in society, and sate sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hindrance than a help. But there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, or some opinion which he had expressed. I never saw Sheridan but in large parties. He had a Bardolph countenance, with heavy features, but his eye possessed the most distinguished brilliancy. Mathews says it is very simple in Tom Moore to admire how Sheridan came by the means of paying the price of Drury Lane Theatre, when all the world knows he never paid it at all; and that Lacy, who sold it, was reduced to want by his breach of faith.[1]

January 14. — An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. Luckily the funny people are gone, and I shall not have the task of grinning when I am serious enough.

A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance,

[1] See Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, vol. i. p. 191. This work was published late in 1825.

shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil, and cannot remedy it.

January 15. — Like yesterday, a hard frost. Thermometer at 10; water in my dressing-room frozen to flint; yet I had a fine walk yesterday, the sun dancing delightfully on "grim Nature's visage hoar."[1] Were it not the plague of being dragged along by another person, I should like such weather as well as summer, but having Tom Purdie to do this office, reconciles me to it. *I cannot cleik with John*, as old Mrs. Mure [of Caldwell] used to say. I mean, that an ordinary menial servant thus hooked to your side reminds me of the twin bodies mentioned by Pitscottie, being two trunks on the same waist and legs. One died before the other, and remained a dead burden on the back of its companion. Such is the close union with a person whom you cannot well converse with, and whose presence is yet indispensable to your getting on. An actual companion, whether humble or your equal, is still worse. But Tom Purdie is just the thing, kneaded up between the friend and servant, as well as Uncle Toby's bowling-green between sand and clay. You are certain he is proud as well as patient under his burden, and you are under no more constraint than with a pony. I must ride him to-day if the weather holds up. Meantime, I will correct that curious fellow Pepys's Diary. I mean the article I have made of it for the Quarterly.

Edinburgh, January 16. — Came through cold roads to as cold news. Hurst and Robinson have suffered a bill to come back upon Constable, which I suppose infers the ruin of both houses. We shall soon see. Dined with the Skenes.

January 17. — James Ballantyne this morning, good

[1] Burns's *Vision.*

honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the preses. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles, to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament House — felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris;* and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent. I have seen Cadell, Ballantyne, and Hogarth: all advise me to execute a trust of my property for payment of my obligations; so does John Gibson,[1] and so I resolve to do. My wife and daughter are gloomy, but yet patient.[2]

[1] Mr. John Gibson, junior, W. S., Mr. James Jollie, W. S., and Mr. Alexander Monypenny, W. S., were the three gentlemen who ultimately agreed to take charge, as trustees, of Sir Walter Scott's affairs; and certainly no gentlemen ever acquitted themselves of such an office in a manner more honorable to themselves, or more satisfactory to a client and his creditors. [Mr. John Gibson had become, on the death of Mr. Hay Donaldson, W. S., in 1822, Sir Walter's private law-agent. In 1871 he published a small volume of *Reminiscences of Scott.* He died in 1879.]

[2] [How Scott spent a part of this melancholy day is told by Miss F. M. F. Skene in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July, 1895: "One of the earliest of my noteworthy recollections is that of a dull, depressing day, when I shared the easy-chair in which my father's dearest friend reposed, with his kind arm thrown around the little girl who nestled by his side. . . . He had come for quiet and refuge from visitors to my father's house, where he was as free as in his own; but he said frankly, he felt unequal to any society but that of his friend's youngest child, who would amuse him with her merry *bavardage.* So I was left alone with him that afternoon, and the scene is present with me as if it were yesterday. Sir Walter, addressing me with the gentle 'dearie' he was wont to apply to little children, told me that he did not wish to speak himself at all, but he would be glad to listen to some fairy-stories if I had any to tell him. Nothing was easier to me, as fairies and hobgoblins were the constant companions of my thoughts, and I plunged at once into a wild invention, to which he listened patiently for a long time, and often laughed out heartily in spite of his

January 18. — He that sleeps too long in the morning, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor. So says the Spaniard, and so say I. I had of course an indifferent night of it. I wish these two days were over; but the worst *is over*. The Bank of Scotland has behaved very well — expressing a resolution to serve Constable's house and me to the uttermost; but as no one can say to what extent Hurst and Robinson's failure may go, borrowing would but linger it out.

January 19. — During yesterday I received formal visits from my friends Skene and Colin Mackenzie (who, I am glad to see, looks well), with every offer of service. The Royal Bank also sent Sir John Hope[1] and Sir Henry Jardine[2] to offer to comply with my wishes. The Advocate[3] came on the same errand. But I gave all the same answer — that my intention was to put the whole into the hands of a trustee, and to be contented with the event, and that all I had to ask was time to do so, and to extricate my affairs. I was assured of every accommodation in this way. From all quarters I have had the same kindness. — Letters from Constable and Robinson have arrived. The last persist in saying they will pay all and everybody. They say, moreover, in a postscript, that had Constable been in town ten days sooner, all would have been well. I feel quite composed and determined to labor. There is no remedy. I *guess* (as Mathews makes his Yankees say) that we shall not be troubled with visitors, and I *calculate* that I will not go out at all; so what can I do better than labor? Even yesterday I went about making notes on Waverley,

overhanging gloom. I was very sorry when a person in authority came to take me back to my schoolroom, leaving the greatest of all story-tellers to forget the child's fantastic romance in his own dark thoughts." — *Glimpses of Some Vanished Celebrities.*]

[1] Sir John Hope of Pinkie and Craighall, Bart.

[2] Sir H. Jardine, Remembrancer in the Scotch Exchequer.

[3] The Right Hon. Sir W. Rae, Bart.

according to Constable's plan.[1] It will do good one day. To-day, when I lock this volume, I go to Woodstock. Heigho! — Knight came to stare at me to complete his portrait. He must have read a tragic page comparative to what he saw at Abbotsford. — We dined of course at home, and before and after dinner I finished about twenty printed pages of Woodstock, but to what effect others must judge. A painful scene after dinner, and another after supper, endeavoring to convince these poor dear creatures that they must not look for miracles, but consider the misfortune as certain, and only to be lessened by patience and labor.

January 20. — Indifferent night — very bilious, which may be want of exercise. *Mais, pourtant, cultivons notre jardin.* The public favor is my only lottery. I have long enjoyed the foremost prize, and something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Why should I not? I have no enemies — many attached friends. The popular ascendency which I have maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances. In fact, critics may say what they will, but "*hain* your reputation, and *tyne*[2] your reputation," is a true proverb.

Sir William Forbes[3] called, — the same kind, honest friend as ever, with all offers of assistance, etc., etc., etc. All anxious to serve me, and careless about their own risk of loss. And these are the cold, hard, money-making men, whose questions and control I apprehended!

[1] [This plan is outlined in a letter to Scott, written March 25, 1823 (see Constable's *Memoir and Correspondence*, vol. iii.), and seems to be the first suggestion of the *Magnum Opus*. Constable's ideas as to the annotation of the Novels were substantially those that later were carried into effect.]

[2] To *hain* anything is, *Anglicè*, to deal very carefully, penuriously, about it — *tyne*, to lose. Scott often used to say, "hain a pen and tyne a pen;" which is nearer the proverb alluded to.

[3] The late Sir William Forbes, Bart., succeeded his father (the biographer of Beattie) as chief of the head private banking-house in Edinburgh. Scott's amiable friend died 24th October, 1828.

Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam also came to see me, and the meeting, though pleasing, was melancholy. It was the first time we had met since the *break-up* of his hopes in the death of his eldest son on his return from India, where he was Chief in Council, and highly esteemed.[1] The Commissioner is not a very early friend of mine, for I scarcely knew him till his settlement in Scotland with his present office. But I have since lived much with him, and taken kindly to him as one of the most pleasant, kind-hearted, benevolent men I have ever known. It is high treason among the Tories to express regard for him or respect for the Jury Court in which he presides. I was against that experiment as much as any one. But it is an experiment, and the establishment (which the fools will not perceive) is the only thing which I see likely to give some prospects of ambition to our Bar, which has been otherwise so much diminished. As for the Chief-Commissioner, I dare say he does what all other people of consequence do in elections, and so forth. But he is the personal friend of the King, and the decided enemy of whatever strikes at the constitutional rights of the Monarch; besides, I love him for the various changes which he has endured through life, and which have been so great as to make him entitled to be regarded in one point of view as the most fortunate — in the other, the most unfortunate man in the world. He has gained and lost two fortunes by the same good luck and the same rash confidence, of which one raised, and the other now threatens, my *peculium*. And his quiet, honorable, and generous submission under circumstances more painful than mine — for the loss of world's wealth was to him aggravated by the death of his youngest and darling son in the West Indies — furnished me at the time and now with a noble example. So Tory and Whig may go be d——d together, as names that have disturbed old Scot-

[1] John Adam, Esq., died on shipboard, on his passage homewards from Calcutta, 4th June, 1825.

land, and torn asunder the most kindly feelings, since the first day they were invented. Yes, d—n them, they are the spells to rouse all our angry passions, and I dare say, notwithstanding the opinion of my private and calm moments, I will open on the cry again so soon as something occurs to claim my words. Even yet, God knows, I would fight in honorable contest with word or blow for my political opinions; but I cannot permit that strife to mix its waters with my daily meal, those waters of bitterness which poison all mutual love and confidence betwixt the well-disposed on either side, and prevent them, if need were, from making mutual concessions and balancing the constitution against the ultras of both parties. The good man seems something broken by these afflictions.

January 21. — Susannah in Tristram Shandy thinks death is best met in bed. I am sure trouble and vexation are not. The watches of the night press wearily when disturbed by fruitless regrets and disagreeable anticipations. But let it pass.

> "Well, Goodman Time, or blunt, or keen,
> Move thou quick, or take thy leisure,
> Longest day will have its e'en,
> Weariest life but treads a measure."

I have seen Cadell, who is very much downcast for the risk of their copyrights being thrown away by a hasty sale. I suggested that if they went very cheap, some means might be fallen on to purchase them in. I fear the split betwixt Constable and Cadell will render impossible what might otherwise be hopeful enough. It is the Italian race-horses, I think, which, instead of riders, have spurs tied to their sides, so as to prick them into a constant gallop. Cadell tells me their gross profit was sometimes £10,000 a year, but much swallowed up with expenses, and his partner's drafts which came to £4000 yearly. What there is to show for this, God

knows. Constable's apparent expenses were very much within bounds.

Colin Mackenzie entered, and with his usual kindness engages to use his influence to recommend some moderate proceeding to Constable's creditors, such as may permit him to go on and turn that species of property to account, which no man alive can manage so well as he.

Followed Mr. Gibson with a most melancholy tale. Things are much worse with Constable than I apprehended. "Naked we entered the world, and naked we leave it — blessed be the name of the Lord!"[1]

January 22. — I feel neither dishonored nor broken down by the bad — now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted — sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them. My poor people whom I loved so well! — There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill luck; — *i. e.*, if I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like, methinks, to go abroad,

"And lay my bones far from the *Tweed*."

But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man as I ever was — neither low-spirited nor *distrait*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the foun-

[1] Job i. 21.

tain is awakened from its inmost recessés, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

Poor Mr. Pole the harper sent to offer me £500 or £600, probably his all.[1] There is much good in the world, after all. But I will involve no friend, either rich or poor. My own right hand shall do it — else will I be *done* in the slang language, and *undone* in common parlance.

I am glad that, beyond my own family, who are, excepting Lady S., young and able to bear sorrow, of which this is the first taste to some of them, most of the hearts are past aching which would have once been inconsolable on this occasion. I do not mean that many will not seriously regret, and some perhaps lament my misfortunes. But my dear mother, my almost sister, Christy Rutherford, poor Will Erskine — those would have been mourners indeed.

Well — exertion — exertion. O Invention, rouse thyself! May man be kind! May God be propitious! The worst is, I never quite know when I am right or wrong; and Ballantyne, who does know in some degree, will fear to tell me. Lockhart would be worth gold just now, but he too might be too diffident to speak broad out. All my hope is in the continued indulgence of

[1] Mr. Pole had long attended Sir Walter Scott's daughters as teacher of the harp. To the end, Scott always spoke of his conduct on this occasion as the most affecting circumstance that accompanied his disasters. His letter was as follows: —

TO SIR W. SCOTT, BART.

DEAR SIR, — I need not tell you how unhappy I am to hear of your sad distresses; but if I can relieve them for an hour, I shall in some measure be repaid. I have five or six hundred pounds that I have no use for, as I am in debt to no soul, and if you can wait, I will dispose of all I have, and convert them into money. It is a duty I owe you; for it is by your kind countenance, as well as a share of good conduct, that I have been able to save a few hundred pounds, which are quite at your service. The acceptance of which, till brighter times to you, will oblige, dear Sir Walter, your obedient

JOHN FRED. POLE.

the public. I have a funeral-letter to the burial of the Chevalier Yelin, a foreigner of learning and talent, who has died at the Royal Hotel. He wished to be introduced to me, and was to have read a paper before the Royal Society, when this introduction was to have taken place. I was not at the Society that evening, and the poor gentleman was taken ill at the meeting and unable to proceed. He went to his bed and never rose again; and now his funeral will be the first public place I shall appear at. He dead, and I ruined; — this is what you call a meeting.[1]

January 23. — Slept ill, not having been abroad these eight days — *splendida bilis*. Then a dead sleep in the morning, and when the awakening comes, a strong feeling how well I could dispense with it for once and forever. This passes away, however, as better and more dutiful thoughts arise in my mind. I know not if my imagination has flagged — probably it has; but at least my powers of labor have not diminished during the last melancholy week. On Monday and Tuesday my exertions were suspended. Since Wednesday inclusive, I have written thirty-eight of my close manuscript pages, of which seventy make a volume of the usual Novel size.

Wrote till twelve A. M., finishing half of what I call a good day's work — ten pages of print, or rather twelve. Then walked in the Princes Street pleasure-grounds with good Samaritan James Skene, the only one among my numerous friends who can properly be termed *amicus curarum mearum*, others being too busy or too gay, and several being estranged by habit.

The walks have been conducted on the whole with much taste, though Skene has undergone much criticism,

[1] [Chevalier Yelin was a native of Bavaria. His wife had told him playfully that he must not leave Scotland without having seen the great bard; and he prolonged his stay in Edinburgh until Scott's return, hoping to meet him at the Royal Society on this evening. — D. D.]

the usual reward of public exertions, on account of his plans. It is singular to walk close beneath the grim old castle, and think what scenes it must have seen, and how many generations of threescore and ten have risen and passed away. It is a place to cure one of too much sensation over earthly subjects of mutation.[1] My wife and girl's tongues are chatting in a lively manner in the drawing-room. It does me good to hear them.

January 24. — Constable came yesterday, and saw me for half an hour. He seemed irritable, but kept his temper under command. Was a little shocked when I intimated that I was disposed to regard the present works in progress as my own. I think I saw two things: 1. That he is desirous to return into the management of his own affairs without Cadell, if he can. 2. That he relies on my connection as the way of helping him out of the slough. Indeed he said he was ruined utterly without my countenance. I certainly will befriend him if I can, but Constable without Cadell is like getting the clock without the pendulum: the one having the ingenuity, the other the caution of the business. I will see my way before making any bargain, and I will help them, I am sure, if I can, without endangering my last cast for freedom. — Worked out my task yesterday. — My kind friend Mrs. Coutts has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was peculiarly interested.

I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst

[1] [On his return from this walk, Mr. Skene wrote his recollections of the conversation which had taken place. These are contained in his unpublished *Reminiscences*, and can be found in a note to the *Journal*, vol. i. p. 91.]

they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, "Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts." Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred — all, I believe, meaning equally well — just shook hands and went on.[1] A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honor, deserve to lose my spurs. No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no

[1] ["The opening of the year 1826 will ever be sad to those who remember the thunderbolt which then fell on Edinburgh in the utterly unexpected bankruptcy of Scott. . . . If an earthquake had swallowed half the town, it would not have produced greater astonishment, sorrow, and dismay. Ballantyne and Constable were merchants, and their fall, had it reached no further, might have been lamented merely as a casualty of commerce. But Sir Walter! The idea that his practical sense had so far left him as to have permitted him to dabble in trade, had never crossed our imagination. How humbled we felt when we saw him — the pride of us all, dashed from his lofty and honorable station, and all the fruits of his well-worked talents gone. He had not then even a political enemy. There was not one of them . . . who would not have given every spare farthing he possessed to retrieve Sir Walter. Well do I remember his first appearance after this calamity was divulged, when he walked into Court one day in January, 1826. There was no affectation, and no reality, of facing it; no look of indifference or defiance; but the manly and modest air of a gentleman conscious of some folly, but of perfect rectitude, and of most heroic and honorable resolutions. It was on that very day, I believe, that he said a very fine thing. Some of his friends offered him, or rather proposed to offer him, enough of money, as was supposed, to enable him to arrange with his creditors. He paused for a moment; and then, recollecting his powers, said proudly, 'No! this right hand shall work it all off!'" — *Cockburn's Memorials of his Time*, p. 430.]

reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me. Went to the funeral of Chevalier Yelin, the literary foreigner mentioned on 22d. How many and how various are the ways of affliction! Here is this poor man dying at a distance from home, his proud heart broken, his wife and family anxiously expecting letters, and doomed only to learn they have lost a husband and father forever. He lies buried on the Calton Hill, near learned and scientific dust — the graves of David Hume and John Playfair being side by side.

January 25. — Anne is ill this morning. May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort? A thought has struck me — Can we do nothing for creditors with the goblin drama, called The Fortunes of Devorgoil? Could it not be added to Woodstock as a fourth volume? Terry refused a gift of it, but he was quite and entirely wrong; it is not good, but it may be made so. Poor Will Erskine liked it much.

January 26. — Spoke to J. B. last night about Devorgoil, who does not seem to relish the proposal, alleging the comparative failure of Halidon Hill. Ay, says Self-Conceit, but he has not read it — and when he does, it is the sort of wild fanciful work betwixt heaven and earth, which men of solid parts do not estimate. Pepys thought Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream the most silly play he had ever seen, and Pepys was probably judging on the same grounds with J. B., though presumptuous enough to form conclusions against a very different work from any of mine. How if I send it to Lockhart by and by?[1]

[1] [Mr. Skene records that Scott spoke to him of *Devorgoil*, saying, " 'It is a sort of goblin tale, and so was the *Castle Spectre*, which had its run.'

Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing all the creditors had unanimously agreed to a private trust. This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt — to doubt is to lose. Sir William Forbes took the chair, and behaved, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That House is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together — desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindliest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down — down — a hundred thoughts.

I hope to sleep better to-night. If I do not, I shall get ill, and then I cannot keep my engagements. Is it not odd? I can command my eyes to be awake when toil and weariness sit on my eyelids, but to draw the curtain of oblivion is beyond my power. I remember some of the wild Buccaneers, in their impiety, succeeded pretty well by shutting hatches and burning brimstone and assafœtida to make a tolerable imitation of *hell* — but the pirates' *heaven* was a wretched affair. It is one of the worst things about this system of ours, that it is a hundred times more easy to inflict pain than to create pleasure.

I asked if the *Castle Spectre* had yielded Lewis much. . . . 'Absolutely nothing . . . but Sheridan generally paid jokes instead of cash, and the joke poor Mat got was not a bad one. . . . They were disputing about something, and Lewis had clenched his argument by proposing to lay a bet about it. "I shall lay what you ought long ago to have paid me for my *Castle Spectre*." "No, no, Mat," said Sheridan, "I never lay large bets; but come, I will bet a trifle with you — I'll bet what the *Castle Spectre* was worth." Now Constable managed differently; he paid well and promptly, but it was all spectral together. Moonshine and no merriment. He sowed my field with one hand, and as liberally scattered the tares with the other.'" See note, *Journal*, vol. i. pp. 94, 95.]

January 27. — Slept better, and less bilious, owing doubtless to the fatigue of the preceding night, and the more comfortable news. Wrote to Laidlaw, directing him to make all preparations for reduction.[1] The Celtic Society present me with the most splendid broadsword I ever saw — a beautiful piece of art, and a most noble weapon. Honorable Mr. Stuart (second son of the Earl of Moray), General Graham Stirling, and MacDougal, attended as a committee to present it. This was very kind of my friends the Celts, with whom I have had so many merry meetings. It will be a rare legacy to Walter — for myself, good lack! it is like Lady Dowager Don's prize in a lottery of hardware; she — a venerable lady who always wore a haunch-hoop, silk *négligée*, and triple ruffles at the elbow — having the luck to gain a pair of silver spurs and a whip to correspond.

January 28. — These last four or five days I have wrought little; to-day I set on the steam and ply my paddles.

January 29. — The proofs came so thick in yesterday that much was not done. But I began to be hard at work to-day. I must not *gurnalize* much.

Mr. Jollie, who is to be my trustee, in conjunction with Gibson, came to see me; — a pleasant and good-humored man, and has high reputation as a man of business. I told him, and I will keep my word, that he would at least have no trouble by my interfering and thwarting their management, which is not the unfrequent case of trusters and trustees.

Constable's business seems unintelligible. No man thought the house worth less than £150,000. Constable told me, when he was making his will, that he was worth

[1] [This letter can be found in the *Abbotsford Notanda*, p. 165. In closing, Scott says: "Lady Scott's spirits were affected at first, but she is getting better. For myself, I feel like the Eildon Hills — quite firm, though a little cloudy."]

£80,000. Great profits on almost all the adventures. No bad speculations — yet neither stock nor debt to show. Constable might have eaten up his share; but Cadell was very frugal. No doubt trading almost entirely on accommodation is dreadfully expensive.

January 30. — I labored fairly yesterday. The stream rose fast — if clearly, is another question; but there is bulk for it, at least — about thirty printed pages.

"And now again, boys, to the oar."

January 31. — There being nothing in the roll this morning, I stay at home from the Court, and add another day's perfect labor to Woodstock, which is worth five days of snatched intervals, when the current of thought and invention is broken in upon, and the mind shaken and diverted from its purpose by a succession of petty interruptions. I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. I feel as if I had shaken off from my shoulders a great mass of garments, rich indeed, but always more a burden than a comfort. I shall be free of an hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration — of the expense of a great hospitality — and what is better, of the great waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. I sleep and eat and work as I was wont; and if I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is, Time must salve that sore, and to Time I trust it.

Since the 14th of this month no guest has broken bread in my house, save G. H. Gordon[1] one morning at

[1] Mr. Gordon (of whom more in the sequel) was at this time Scott's amanuensis; he copied, that is to say, the MS. for press.

breakfast. This happened never before since I had a house of my own. But I have played Abou Hassan long enough; and if the Caliph comes I would turn him back again.

February 1. — A most generous letter (though not more so than I expected) from Walter and Jane, offering to interpose with their fortune, etc. God Almighty forbid! — that were too unnatural in me to accept, though dutiful and affectionate in them to offer. They talk of India still. With my damaged fortune I cannot help them to remain by exchange and so forth. God send what is for the best. Attended the Court, and saw J. B. and Cadell as I returned. Both very gloomy. Came home to work, etc., about two.

February 2. — An odd visit this morning from Miss [Jane Bell] of [North Shields], whose lawsuit with a Methodist parson of the name of [Hill] made some noise. The worthy divine had in the basest manner interfered to prevent this lady's marriage by two anonymous letters, in which he contrived to refer the lover, to whom they were addressed, for farther corroboration to *himself*. The whole imposition makes the subject of a little pamphlet.[1] The lady ventured for redress into the thicket of English law — lost one suit — gained another, with £300 damages, and was ruined. The appearance and person of Miss [Bell] are prepossessing. She is about thirty years old, a brunette, with regular and pleasing features, marked with melancholy — an enthusiast in literature, and probably in religion. She had been at Abbotsford to see me, and made her way to me here, in the vain hope that she could get her story worked up into a novel; and certainly the thing is capable of interesting

[1] [*The Cause of Truth Defended.* Two Trials of the Rev. T. Hill, Methodist Preacher, for Defamation of the Character of Miss Bell. Newcastle, 1825; London, 1827.]

situations. It throws a curious light upon the aristocratic or rather hieratic influence exercised by the Methodist preachers within the *connection*, as it is called. Admirable food this would be for the Quarterly, or any other reviewers, who might desire to feed fat their grudge against these sectarians. But there are two reasons against such a publication. First, it could do the poor sufferer no good. Secondly, it might hurt the Methodist connection very much, which I for one would not like to injure. They have their faults, and are peculiarly liable to those of hypocrisy, and spiritual ambition, and priestcraft. On the other hand, they do infinite good, carrying religion into classes in society where it would scarce be found to penetrate, did it rely merely upon proof of its doctrines, upon calm reason, and upon rational argument. The Methodists add a powerful appeal to the feelings and passions; and though I believe this is often exaggerated into absolute enthusiasm, yet I consider upon the whole they do much to keep alive a sense of religion, and the practice of morality necessarily connected with it. It is much to the discredit of the Methodist clergy, that when this calumniator was actually convicted of guilt morally worse than many men are hanged for, they only degraded him from the *first* to the *second* class of their preachers. If they believed him innocent, they did too much — if guilty, far too little.

February 3. — This is the first time since my troubles that I felt at awaking,

> " I had drunken deep
> Of all the blessedness of sleep." [1]

I made not the slightest pause, nor dreamed a single dream, nor even changed my side. This is a blessing to be grateful for. — There is to be a meeting of the creditors to-day, but I care not for the issue. If they drag me into the Court, *obtorto collo*, instead of going

[1] [Coleridge's *Christabel*. Part II.]

into this scheme of arrangement, they will do themselves a great injury, and perhaps eventually do me good, though it would give me much pain. — James Ballantyne is severely critical on what he calls imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe in Woodstock. Many will think with him — yet I am of opinion he is quite wrong, or as friend J. F.[1] says, *vrong*. In the first place, am I to look on the mere fact of another author having treated a subject happily, as a bird looks on a potato-bogle which scares it away from a field, otherwise as free to its depredations as anywhere else? In the second place, I have taken a wide difference: my object is not to excite fear of supernatural things in my reader, but to show the effect of such fear upon the agents in the story — one a man of sense and firmness — one a man unhinged by remorse — one a stupid uninquiring clown — one a learned and worthy, but superstitious divine. In the third place, the book turns on this hinge, and cannot want it. But I will try to insinuate the refutation of Aldiboronti's exception into the prefatory matter. — From the 19th January to the 2d

[1] J. F. stands for James Ferrier, Esq. — one of Sir Walter's brethren of the Clerks' Table — the father of his esteemed and admired friend, the authoress of *Marriage*, *The Inheritance*, etc. (I had found, as the second edition was advancing through the press, that Sir Walter owed not a little to the kindness of Mr. Ferrier, in the arrangement with Mr. Home, by which he came, in 1811, into the full enjoyment of his rights as a Clerk of Session. The following is part of a letter to Mr. F., dated Ashestiel, 18th September, 1811: —

"My dear Sir, — I am favored with your letter, acquainting me with your kind exertions on my part to supply my Lord Advocate with his materials. If I were to begin acknowledging my feelings of the friendship which you have shown me in this (to me very important matter), it would fill a much longer letter than at present I propose to write. But as you have thought me worthy of so much kindness, you must also give me credit for feeling it as I should do, and that is all that can be said among friends. . . . Yours faithfully,

Walter Scott.

"Pray, as you are a ruling elder, solve me a case of conscience. They are clearing out the modern additions from Melrose Abbey — will it be absolute sacrilege to build my cottage with the stones their operations afford, providing I can get them for next to nothing?")

February inclusive is exactly fifteen days, during which time, with the intervention of some days' idleness, to let imagination brood on the task a little, I have written a volume. I think, for a bet, I could have done it in ten days. Then I must have had no Court of Session to take me up hours every morning, and dissipate my attention and powers of working for the rest of the day. A volume, at cheapest, is worth £1000. This is working at the rate of £24,000 a year; but then we must not bake buns faster than people have appetite to eat them. They are not essential to the market, like potatoes.

John Gibson came to tell me in the evening that a meeting to-day had approved of the proposed trust. I know not why, but the news gives me little concern. I heard it as a party indifferent. I remember hearing that Mandrin[1] testified some horror when he found himself bound alive on the wheel, and saw the executioner approach with a bar of iron to break his limbs. After the second and third blow, he fell a-laughing, and being asked the reason by his confessor, said he laughed at his own folly, which had anticipated increased agony at every blow, when it was obvious that the *first* must have jarred and confounded the system of the nerves so much as to render the succeeding blows of little consequence. I suppose it is so with the moral feeling; at least I could not bring myself to be anxious whether these matters were settled one way or other.

February 4. — Wrote to Mr. Laidlaw to come to town upon Monday, and see the trustees. To farm or not to farm, that is the question. With our careless habits, it were best, I think, to risk as little as possible. Lady Scott will not exceed with ready money in her hand; but

[1] "Authentic Memoirs of the remarkable Life and surprising Exploits of Mandrin, Captain-General of the French Smugglers, who for the space of nine months resolutely stood in defiance of the whole Army of France, etc., 8vo. Lond. 1755." See Waverley Novels, *The Betrothed*, chap. xxx., note.

calculating on the produce of a farm is different, and neither she nor I are capable of that minute economy. Two cows should be all we should keep. But I find Lady S. inclines much for the four. If she had her youthful activity, and could manage things, it would be well, and would amuse her. But I fear it is too late for work.

Wrote only two pages (of manuscript) and a half to-day. As the boatswain said, one can't dance always *nouther*. But, were we sure of the quality of the stuff, what opportunities for labor does this same system of retreat afford us! I am convinced that in three years I could do more than in the last ten, but for the mine being, I fear, exhausted. Give me my popularity (*an awful postulate!*) and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years; and it is *not* lost yet, at least.

February 5. — Rose after a sound sleep, and here am I without bile or anything to perturb my inward man. It is just about three weeks since so great a change took place in my relations in society, and already I am indifferent to it. But I have been always told my feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and privation, are much colder than those of other people.

"I think the Romans call it stoicism."[1]

Missie was in the drawing-room, and overheard William Clerk and me laughing excessively at some foolery or other in the back-room, to her no small surprise, which she did not keep to herself. But do people suppose that he was less sorry for his poor sister, or I for my lost fortune? If I have a very strong passion in the world, it is *pride*, and that never hinged upon world's gear, which was always with me — light come, light go.

February 6. — Letters received yesterday from Lord Montagu, John Morritt, and Mrs. Hughes, — kind and

[1] [Addison's *Cato*, Act I. Scene 4.]

dear friends all, — with solicitous inquiries. But it is very tiresome to tell my story over again, and I really hope I have few more friends intimate enough to ask me for it. I dread letter-writing, and envy the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen or ink. What then? one must write; it is a part of the law we live on. Talking of writing, I finished my six pages, neat and handsome, yesterday. — N. B. At night I fell asleep, and the oil dropped from the lamp upon my manuscript. Will this extreme unction make it go smoothly down with the public?

> "Thus idly we profane the sacred time,
> By silly prose, light jest, and lighter rhyme."

I have a song to write, too, and I am not thinking of it. I trust it will come upon me at once — a sort of catch it should be.[1] I walked out, feeling a little overwrought. [. . . Obliged to borrow £240, to be refunded in spring, from John Gibson, to pay my nephew's outfit and passage to Bombay. I wish I could have got this money otherwise, but I must not let the orphan boy, and such a clever fellow, miscarry through my fault.]

February 7. — My old friend Sir Peter Murray called to offer his own assistance, Lord Justice-Clerk's, and Abercromby's, to negotiate for me a seat upon the Bench [of the Court of Session] instead of my sheriffdom and clerkship. I explained to him the use which I could make of my pen was not, I thought, consistent with that situation; and that, besides, I had neglected the law too long to permit me to think of it: but this was kindly and honorably done. I can see people think me much worse off than I think myself. They may be right; but I will not be beat till I have tried a rally, and a bold one.

February 8. — Slept ill, and rather bilious in the

[1] See "Glee for King Charles," *Woodstock*, chap. xx.

morning. Many of the Bench now are my juniors. I will not seek *ex eleemosynâ* a place which, had I turned my studies that way, I might have aspired to long ago *ex meritis*. My pen should do much better for me than the odd £1000 a year. If it fails, I will lean on what they leave me. Another chance might be, if it fails, in the patronage which might, after a year or two, place me in Exchequer. But I do not count on this unless, indeed, the Duke of Buccleuch, when he comes of age, should choose to make play. Got to my work again, and wrote easier than the two last days.

Mr. Laidlaw came in from Abbotsford, and dined with us. We spent the evening in laying down plans for the farm, and deciding whom we should keep and whom dismiss among the people. This we did on the true negro-driving principle of self-interest — the only principle I know which *never* swerves from its objects. We chose all the active, young, and powerful men, turning old age and infirmity adrift. I cannot help this, for a guinea cannot do the work of five; but I will contrive to make it easier to the sufferers.

February 9. — A stormy morning, lowering and blustering like our fortunes. *Mea virtute me involvo*. But I must say to the muse of fiction as the Earl of Pembroke said to the ejected nuns of Wilton, "Go spin, you jades, go spin!" Perhaps she has no tow on her *rock*. When I was at Kilkenny last year we went to see a nunnery, but could not converse with the sisters because they were in *strict retreat*. I was delighted with the red-nosed Padre, who showed us the place with a sort of proud, unctuous humiliation, and apparent dereliction of the world, that had to me the air of a complete Tartuffe; a strong, sanguine, square-shouldered son of the Church, whom a Protestant would be apt to warrant against any sufferings he was like to sustain by privation. My purpose, however, just now was to talk of the *strict*

retreat, which did not prevent the nuns from walking in their little garden, peeping at us, and allowing us to peep at them. Well, now *we* are in *strict retreat;* and if we had been so last year, instead of gallivanting to Ireland, this affair might not have befallen — if literary labor could have prevented it. But who could have suspected Constable's timbers to have been rotten from the beginning?

Visited the Exhibition on my way home from the Court. The new rooms are most splendid, and several good pictures. The institution has subsisted but five years, and it is astonishing how much superior the worst of the present collection are to the teaboard-looking things which first appeared. John Thomson, of Duddingston, has far the finest picture in the Exhibition, of a large size — subject *Dunluce*, a ruinous castle of the Antrim family, near the Giant's Causeway, with one of those terrible seas and skies which only Thomson can paint. Found Scrope there, improving a picture of his own, an Italian scene in Calabria. He is, I think, one of the very best amateur painters I ever saw — Sir George Beaumont scarcely excepted.

I would not write to-day after I came home. I will not say could not, for it is not true; but I was lazy; felt the desire *far niente*, which is the sign of one's mind being at ease. I read The English in Italy, which is a clever book. Byron used to kick and frisk more contemptuously against the literary gravity and slang than any one I ever knew who had climbed so high. Then, it is true, I never knew any one climb so high — and before you despise the eminence, carrying people along with you as convinced that you are not playing the fox and the grapes, you must be at the top. Moore told me some delightful stories of him.[1] . . . He wrote from impulse, never from effort; and therefore I have always

[1] Here follow several anecdotes, since published in Moore's *Life of Byron*.

reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me. We have many men of high poetical talent, but none, I think, of that ever-gushing and perennial fountain of natural waters.

Mr. Laidlaw dined with us. Says Mr. Gibson told him he would dispose of my affairs, were it any but Sir W. S. No doubt, so should I. I am wellnigh doing so at any rate. But, *fortuna juvante!* much may be achieved. At worst, the prospect is not very discouraging to one who wants little. Methinks I have been like Burns's poor laborer,

> "So constantly in Ruin's sight,
> The view o't gives me little fright."

CHAPTER LXVII

EXTRACT FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDA. — ANECDOTE FROM MR. SKENE. — LETTERS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1826, TO J. G. LOCKHART, MR. MORRITT, AND LADY DAVY. — RESULT OF THE EMBARRASSMENTS OF CONSTABLE, HURST, AND BALLANTYNE. — RESOLUTION OF SIR WALTER SCOTT. — MALACHI MALAGROWTHER

1826

I INTERRUPT, for a moment, Sir Walter's Diary, to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, he found (as we have seen) that Hurst and Co. had dishonored a bill of Constable's; and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gayly as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, "Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament House to-morrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, "My friend, give me a shake of your hand — mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connection with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning

be made public.[1] He added, "Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose." When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business — to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter — he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows: —

"On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned — but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked, 'Well, what is the actual step we must first take — I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do — refuse payment — to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, 'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'"

After the ample details of Scott's Diary, it would be idle to quote here many of his private letters in January, 1826; but I must give two of those addressed to myself, — one written at Abbotsford on the 15th, the day before

[1] [The account of this meeting given in Mr. Skene's *Reminiscences* is quoted in a note to the *Journal*, vol. i. p. 82.]

he started for Edinburgh to receive the fatal intelligence — the other on the 20th. It will be seen that I had been so very unwise as to intermingle with the account of one of my painful interviews with Constable an expression of surprise at the nature of Sir Walter's commercial engagements, which had then for the first time been explained to me; and every reader will, I am sure, appreciate the gentleness of the reply, however unsatisfactory he may consider it as regards the main fact in question.

TO JOHN LOCKHART, ESQ., 25 PALL MALL, LONDON.

ABBOTSFORD, January 15, 1826.

MY DEAR LOCKHART, — I have both your packets. I have been quite well since my attack, only for some time very down-hearted with the calomel and another nasty stuff they call hyoscyamus — and to say truth, the silence of my own household, which used to be merry at this season.

I enclose the article on Pepys. It is totally uncorrected, so I wish of course much to see it in proof if possible, as it must be dreadfully inaccurate; the opiate was busy with my brain when the beginning was written, and as James Ballantyne complains woefully, so will your printer, I doubt. The subject is like a good sirloin, which requires only to be basted with its own drippings. I had little trouble of research or reference; perhaps I have made it too long, or introduced too many extracts — if so, use the pruning-knife, hedgebill, or axe, *ad libitum*. You know I don't care a curse about what I write, or what becomes of it.

To-morrow, snow permitting, we go in to Edinburgh; meantime ye can expect no news from this place. I saw poor Chiefswood the other day. Cock-a-pistol[1] sends his humble remembrances. Commend me a thou-

[1] A gardener, by name James Scott, who lived at a place called popularly Cock-a-pistol, because the battle of Melrose (A. D. 1526) began there.

sand times to the magnanimous Johnnie. I live in hopes he will not greatly miss Marion and the red cow. Don't let him forget poor ha-papa. — Farewell, my dear Lockhart: never trouble yourself about writing to me, for I suspect you have enough of that upon hand.

Pardon my sending you such an unwashed, uncombed thing as the enclosed. I really can't see now to read my own hand, so bad have my eyes or my fingers or both become.

Always yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

TO THE SAME.

EDINBURGH, January 20, 1826.

MY DEAR LOCKHART, — I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements — (the better thing almost of the two) — to make good all claims upon Ballantyne and Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst and Co. nor Constable and Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute — even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favorably. It is needless to add, that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more — or £2000 — or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and must now pay my own. If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier, nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow — it is an infirmity of nature.

I have made my matters public, and have had splendid

offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden, than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better — excluded from the bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for The Lay of the Last Minstrel, and — it was a price that made men's hair stand on end — £1000 for Marmion. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst and Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15*s.* in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

I have had visits from all the moneyed people, offering their purses — and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measure I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own — for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,-

000,[1] which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'éclat;* but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and working at Woodstock like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best — it will be well.

Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song[2] and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship. Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.

From Sir Walter's letters of the same period, to friends out of his own family, I select the following: —

TO J. B. S. MORRITT, ESQ., ETC., MARINE TERRACE, BRIGHTON.

EDINBURGH, 6th February, 1826.

MY DEAR MORRITT, — It is very true I have been, and am, in danger of a pecuniary loss, and probably a

[1] Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent person.
(Nor did I, till some years after Sir Walter's death, and even then under conditions of secrecy. — 1848.)

[2] *Up with the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee.*

very large one, which, in the uncertainty, I look at as to the full extent, being the manly way of calculating such matters, since one may be better, but can hardly be worse. I can't say I feel overjoyed at losing a large sum of hard-earned money in a most unexpected manner, for all men considered Constable's people secure as the Bank; yet, as I have obtained an arrangement of payment convenient for everybody concerned, and easy for myself, I cannot say that I care much about the matter. Some economical restrictions I will make; and it happened oddly that they were such as Lady Scott and myself had almost determined upon without this compulsion. Abbotsford will henceforth be our only establishment; and during the time I must be in town, I will take my bed at the Albyn Club. We shall also break off the rather excessive hospitality to which we were exposed, and no longer stand host and hostess to all that do pilgrimage to Melrose. Then I give up an expensive farm, which I always hated, and turn all my odds and ends into cash. I do not reckon much on my literary exertions — I mean in proportion to former success — because popular taste may fluctuate. But with a moderate degree of the favor which I have always had, my time my own, and my mind unplagued about other things, I may boldly promise myself soon to get the better of this blow.

In these circumstances, I should be unjust and ungrateful to ask or accept the pity of my friends. I, for one, do not see there is much occasion for making moan about it. My womankind will be the greater sufferers, — yet even they look cheerily forward; and, for myself, the blowing off my hat in a stormy day has given me more uneasiness.

I envy your Brighton party and your fine weather. When I was at Abbotsford, the mercury was down at six or seven in the morning more than once. I am hammering away at a bit of a story from the old affair of the

diablerie at Woodstock in the Long Parliament times. I don't like it much. I am obliged to hamper my fanatics greatly too much to make them effective; but I make the sacrifice on principle; so, perhaps, I shall deserve good success in other parts of the work. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have written a volume in exactly fifteen days. To be sure, I permitted no interruptions. But then I took exercise, and for ten days of the fifteen attended the Court of Session from two to four hours every day. This is nothing, however, to writing Ivanhoe when I had the actual cramp in my stomach; but I have no idea of these things preventing a man from doing what he has a mind. My love to all the party at Brighton — fireside party I had almost said, but you scorn my words — seaside party then be it. Lady Scott and Anne join in kindest love. I must close my letter, for one of the consequences of our misfortunes is that we dine every day at half-past four o'clock; which premature hour arises, I suppose, from sorrow being hungry as well as thirsty. One most laughable part of our tragic comedy was, that every friend in the world came formally, just as they do here when a relation dies, thinking that the eclipse of *les beaux yeux de ma cassette* was perhaps a loss as deserving of consolation.

We heard an unpleasant report that your nephew was ill. I am glad to see from your letter it is only the lady, and in the right way; and I hope, *Scotticè loquens*, she will be worse before she is better. This mistake is something like the Irish blunder in Faulkner's Journal, "For *his* Grace the Duchess of Devonshire was safely delivered — read *her* Grace the Duke of Devonshire, etc." — Always yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

P. S. — Will you do me a favor? Set fire to the Chinese stables; and if it embrace the whole of the Pavilion, it will rid me of a great eye-sore.

TO LADY DAVY, 26 PARK STREET, LONDON.

6th February, 1826.

My dear Lady Davy, — A very few minutes since, I received your kind letter, and answer it in all frankness, and, in Iago's words, "I am *hurt*, ma'am, but not killed" — nor even kilt. I have made so much by literature, that, even should this loss fall in its whole extent, and we now make preparations for the worst, it will not break, and has not broken, my sleep. If I have good luck, I may be as rich again as ever; if not, I shall have still far more than many of the most deserving people in Britain — soldiers, sailors, statesmen, or men of literature.

I am much obliged to you for your kindness to Sophia, who has tact, and great truth of character, I believe. She will wish to take her company, as the scandal said ladies liked their wine, little and good; and I need not say I shall be greatly obliged by your continued notice of one you have known now for a long time. I am, between ourselves, afraid of the little boy; he is terribly delicate in constitution, and so twined about the parents' hearts, that —— But it is needless croaking; what is written on our foreheads at our birth shall be accomplished. So far I am a good Moslem.

Lockhart is, I think, in his own line, and therefore I do not regret his absence, though, in our present arrangement, as my wife and Anne propose to remain all the year round at Abbotsford, I shall be solitary enough in my lodgings. But I always loved being a bear and sucking my paws in solitude, better than being a lion and ramping for the amusement of others; and as I propose to slam the door in the face of all and sundry for these three years to come, and neither eat nor give to eat, I shall come forth bearish enough, should I live to make another avatar. Seriously, I intend to receive nobody, old and intimate friends excepted, at Abbotsford this

season, for it costs me much more in time than otherwise.

I beg my kindest compliments to Sir Humphry; and tell him Ill Luck, that direful chemist, never put into his crucible a more indissoluble piece of stuff than your affectionate cousin and sincere well-wisher,

WALTER SCOTT.[1]

[1] [In his Diary, February 7, Scott writes: "Had letters yesterday from Lady Davy and Lady Louisa Stuart, two very different persons." (Sir Walter's reply to the latter can be found in *Selections from the Manuscripts of Lady Louisa Stuart.*) "Lady Davy, daughter and co-heiress of a wealthy Antigua merchant, has been known to me all my life. Her father was a relation of ours of a Scotch calculation. He was of a good family, Kerr of Bloodielaws, but decayed. Miss Jane Kerr married first Mr. Apreece, son of a Welsh Baronet. The match was not happy. I had lost all acquaintance with her for a long time, when about twenty years ago we renewed it in London. She was then a widow, gay, clever, and most actively ambitious to play a distinguished part in London society. Her fortune, though handsome and easy, was not large enough to make way by dint of showy entertainments, and so forth. So she took the *blue* line, and by great tact and management actually established herself as a leader of literary fashion. Soon after, she visited Edinburgh for a season or two, and studied the Northern Lights. One of the best of them, poor Jack Playfair, was disposed 'to shoot madly from his sphere,' and I believe asked her, but he was a little too old. She found a fitter husband in every respect in Sir Humphry Davy, to whom she gave a handsome fortune, and whose splendid talents and situation as President of the Royal Society gave her naturally a distinguished place in the literary society of the Metropolis. Now this is a very curious instance of an active-minded woman forcing her way to the point from which she seemed furthest excluded. For, though clever and even witty, she had no peculiar accomplishment, and certainly no good taste either for science or letters naturally. I was once in the Hebrides with her, and I admired to observe how amidst sea-sickness, fatigue, some danger, and a good deal of indifference as to what she saw, she gallantly maintained her determination to see everything. It marked her strength of character, and she joined to it much tact, and always addressed people on the right side. So she stands high, and deservedly so, for to these active qualities, more French I think than English, and partaking of the Creole vivacity and suppleness of character, she adds, I believe, honorable principles and an excellent heart. As a lion-catcher, I could pit her against the world. She flung her lasso (see Hall's *South America*) over Byron himself. But then, poor soul, she is not happy. She has a temper, and Davy has a temper, and these tempers are not one temper but two tempers, and they quarrel like cat and dog, which may be good for stirring up the stagnation of domestic life, but they let the world see it, and that is not so well. Now in all this I may be thought a little harsh

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Diary, it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what struggles it cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanor.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to £256,000; those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about £300,000. The former paid, ultimately, only 2*s.* 9*d.* in the pound; the latter about 1*s.* 3*d.*

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co. might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concerns did, for all its obligations, but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co. (whose claims, including sheafs of bills of all descriptions, amounted to £117,000) would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his life-rent at Abbotsford, among other things — and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-

on my friend, but it is between my *Gurnal* and me, and, moreover, I would cry heartily if anything were to ail my little cousin, though she be addicted to rule the Cerulean atmosphere. Then I suspect the cares of this as well as other empires overbalance its pleasures. There must be difficulty in being always in the right humor to hold a court. There are usurpers to be encountered, and insurrections to be put down, an incessant troop, *bienséances* to be discharged, a sort of etiquette which is the curse of all courts. An old lion cannot get hamstrung quietly at four hundred miles distance, but the Empress must send him her condolence and a pot of lip-salve. To be sure the monster is consanguinean, as Sir Toby says." — *Journal*, vol. i. p. 107. Lady Davy died in May, 1855, having survived her husband twenty-six years.]

in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January, 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt that the result of such an examination in January, 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honorable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a large extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honor and his self-respect: —

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past."[1]

[1] This fine line is from a sonnet on Sir Walter Scott's death, by the late Sir Egerton Brydges.

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting toward himself; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary shows, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three Letters of Malachi Malagrowther, which appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr. Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by "the Black Hussar of Literature."

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's Letters in Ireland; a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the appearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolu-

tion. They were answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (then the semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Croker, who, perhaps, hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures; and the Ministers erelong found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr. Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropt; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which, if farther pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked-for appearance as a hostile agitator.

I believe, with these hints, the reader is sufficiently prepared for resuming Sir Walter's Diary.

CHAPTER LXVIII

DIARY RESUMED. — ANECDOTE OF CULLODEN. — LETTER FROM MACKINTOSH. — EXHIBITION OF PICTURES. — MODERN PAINTERS. — HABITS OF COMPOSITION. — GLENGARRY. — ADVOCATES' LIBRARY. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH CREDITORS. — FIRST LETTER OF MALACHI MALAGROWTHER. — CHRONIQUE DE JACQUES DE LALAIN. — PROGRESS OF WOODSTOCK AND BUONAPARTE. — NOVELS BY GALT, MISS AUSTEN, AND LADY MORGAN. — SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF MALACHI. — DEPARTURE FROM CASTLE STREET

1826

DIARY

Edinburgh, February 10. — Went through, for a new day, the task of buttoning, which seems to me somehow to fill up more of my morning than usual — not, certainly, that such is the case, but that my mind attends to the process, having so little left to hope or fear. The half hour between waking and rising has all my life proved propitious to any task which was exercising my invention. When I got over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times to fill up a passage in a poem, it was always when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case, that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself, when I am at a loss, "Never mind; we shall have it at seven o'clock to-morrow morning." If I have forgot a circumstance, or a name, or a copy of

verses, it is the same thing. I think the first hour of the morning is also favorable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the *horn* — that projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them round. But I could only do this before breakfast. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try will find the feat no easy one. This morning I had some new ideas respecting Woodstock, which will make the story better. The devil of a difficulty is, that one puzzles the skein in order to excite curiosity, and then cannot disentangle it for the satisfaction of the prying fiend they have raised. — I have a prettily expressed letter of condolence from Sir James Mackintosh.[1] Yesterday I had an anecdote from old Sir

[1] This letter is so honorable to the writer, as well as to Sir Walter, that I am tempted to insert it in a note: —

TO SIR W. SCOTT, BART., EDINBURGH.

CADOGAN PLACE, February 7, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR, — Having been sailing on Windermere when Lord Gifford passed the Lakes, and almost constantly confined since my return to town, I did not hear till two days ago of your very kind message, which, if I had received it in the north, I should probably have answered in person. I do not know that I should now have troubled you with written thanks for what is so natural to you as an act of courtesy and hospitality, if I were not in hopes that you might consider it as excuse enough for an indulgence of inclination which might otherwise be thought intrusive.

No man living has given pleasure to so many persons as you have done, and you must be assured that great multitudes who never saw you, in every quarter of the world, will regret the slightest disturbance of your convenience. But, as I have observed that the express declaration of one individual sometimes makes more impression than the strongest assurance of the sentiments of multitudes, I venture to say that I most sincerely lament that any untoward circumstances should, even for a time, interrupt the indulgence of your taste and your liberal enjoyments. I am sorry that Scotland should, for a moment, lose the very peculiar distinction of having the honors of the country done to visitors by the person at the head of our literature. Above all, I am sorry that a fortune earned by genius, and expended so generously, should be for the shortest time shaken by the general calamities.

Those dispositions of yours which most quicken the fellow-feelings of

James Steuart Denham,[1] which is worth writing down. His uncle, Lord Elcho, was, as is well known, engaged in the affair of 1745. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of matters from beginning to end. But after the left wing of the Highlanders was repulsed and broken at Culloden, Elcho rode up to the Chevalier and told him all was lost, and that nothing remained except to charge at the head of two thousand men, who were still unbroken, and either turn the fate of the day, or die sword in hand, as became his pretensions. The Chevalier gave him some evasive answer, and turning his horse's head, rode off the field. Lord Elcho called after him (I write his very words), "There you go for a damned cowardly Italian!" and never would see him again, though he lost his property and remained an exile in the cause. Lord Elcho left two copies of his memoirs, one with Sir James Steuart's family, one with Lord Wemyss. This is better evidence than the romance of Chevalier Johnstone; and I have little doubt it is true. Yet it is no proof of the Prince's cowardice, though it shows him to have been no John of Gaunt. Princes are constantly surrounded with people who hold up their own *life* and *safety* to them as by far the most

others will best console you. I have heard with delight that your composure and cheerfulness have already comforted those who are most affectionately interested in you. What I heard of your happy temper in this way reminded me of Warburton's fine character of Bayle, "He had a soul superior to the attacks of fortune, and a heart practised to the best philosophy." You have expended your fortune too well not to be consoled for a temporary suspension of its produce; you have your genius, your fame, and, what is better than either, your kind and cheerful nature.

I trust so much to your good-natured indulgence, that I hope you will pardon me for joining my sincere but very humble voice to the admiration and sympathy of Europe. — I am, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

J. Mackintosh.

[1] General Sir James Steuart Denham of Coltness, Baronet, Colonel of the Scots Greys. His father, the celebrated political economist, took part in the Rebellion of 1745, and was long afterwards an exile. The reader is no doubt acquainted with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters*, addressed to him and his wife Lady Frances. (Sir James died at Cheltenham in August, 1839, aged 95.)

important stake in any contest; and this is a doctrine in which conviction is easily received. Such an eminent person finds everybody's advice, save here and there that of a desperate Elcho, recommend obedience to the natural instinct of self-preservation, which very often men of inferior situations find it difficult to combat, when all the world are crying to them to get on and be damned, instead of encouraging them to run away. At Prestonpans the Chevalier offered to lead the van, and he was with the second line, which, during that brief affair, followed the first very close. Johnstone's own account, carefully read, brings him within a pistol-shot of the first line. At the same time, Charles Edward had not a head or heart for great things, notwithstanding his daring adventure; and the Irish officers, by whom he was guided, were poor creatures. Lord George Murray was the soul of the undertaking.[1]

February 11. — Court sat till half-past one. A man, calling himself [Charles Gray] of [Carse], writes to me, expressing sympathy for my misfortunes, and offering me half the profits of what, if I understand him right, is a patent medicine, to which I suppose he expects me to stand trumpeter. He endeavors to get over my objections to accepting his liberality (supposing me to entertain them) by assuring me his conduct is founded on "*a sage selfishness!*" This is diverting enough. I suppose the Commissioners of Police will next send me a letter of condolence, begging my acceptance of a broom, a shovel, and a scavenger's great-coat, and assuring me that they had appointed me to all the emoluments of a well-frequented crossing. It would be doing more than

[1] "Had Prince Charles slept during the whole of the expedition," says the Chevalier Johnstone, "and allowed Lord George Murray to act for him according to his own judgment, there is every reason for supposing he would have found the crown of Great Britain on his head when he awoke." — *Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745*, etc. London, 1810. 4to, p. 140.

they have done of late for the cleanliness of the streets, which, witness my shoes, are in a piteous pickle. I thanked the selfish sage with due decorum — for what purpose can anger serve? I remember once before, a mad woman, from about Alnwick, baited me with letters and plans — first for charity for herself or some *protégé* — I gave my guinea — then she wanted to have half the profits of a novel which I was to publish under my name and auspices. She sent me the manuscript, and a *moving* tale it was, for some of the scenes lay in the *Cabinet à l'eau*. I declined the partnership. Lastly, my fair correspondent insisted I was a lover of speculation, and would be much profited by going shares in a patent medicine which she had invented for the benefit of little babes. I dreaded to have anything to do with such a Herod-like affair, and begged to decline the honor of her correspondence in future. I should have thought the thing a quiz but that the novel was real and substantial. Sir Alexander Don called, and we had a good laugh together.

February 12. — Having ended the second volume of Woodstock last night, I had to begin the third this morning. Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger. I always pushed for the pleasantest route, and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I never could lay down a plan — or, having laid it down, I never could adhere to it; the action of composition always extended some passages, and abridged or omitted others; and personages were rendered important or insignificant, not according to their agency in the original conception of the piece, but according to the success, or otherwise, with which I was able to bring them out. I only tried to make that which I was actually writing diverting and

interesting, leaving the rest to fate. I have been often amused with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly labored, when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move, and the eye never again saw them, except in proof. Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over. This *hab nab at a venture* is a perilous style, I grant, but I cannot help it. When I strain my mind to ideas which are purely imaginative — for argument is a different thing — it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape — that I think away the whole vivacity of my original conception, and that the results are cold, tame, and spiritless. It is the difference between a written oration and one bursting from the unpremeditated exertions of the speaker, which have always something the air of enthusiasm and inspiration. I would not have young authors imitate my carelessness, however.

Read a few pages of Will D'Avenant, who was fond of having it supposed that Shakespeare intrigued with his mother. I think the pretension can only be treated as Phaeton was, according to Fielding's farce —

> "Besides, by all the village boys I 'm shamed:
> You the sun's son, you rascal? — you be damn'd!"

Egad — I 'll put that into Woodstock. It might come well from the old admirer of Shakespeare. Then Fielding's lines were not written. What then? — it is an anachronism for some sly rogue to detect. Besides, it is easy to swear they were written, and that Fielding adopted them from tradition.[1]

February 13. — The Institution for the encouragement of the Fine Arts opens to-day with a handsome entertainment in the Exhibition-room, as at Somerset House. It strikes me that the direction given by amateurs and professors to their *protégés* and pupils, who aspire to be artists, is upon a pedantic and false principle. All the fine arts have it for their highest and most

[1] See the couplet, and the apology, in *Woodstock*, chap. xxv.

legitimate end and purpose, to affect the human passions, or smooth and alleviate, for a time, the near unquiet feelings of the mind — to excite wonder, or terror, or pleasure, or emotion of some kind or other. It often happens that, in the very rise and origin of these arts, as in the instance of Homer, the principal object is obtained in a degree not equalled by any successor. But there is a degree of execution, which, in more refined times, the poet or musician begins to study, which gives a value of its own to their productions, of a different kind from the rude strength of their predecessors. Poetry becomes complicated in its rules — music learned in its cadences and harmonies — rhetoric subtle in its periods. There is more given to the labor of executing — less attained by the effect produced. Still the nobler and popular end of these arts is not forgotten; and if we have some productions too learned — too *recherchés* for public feeling — we have, every now and then, music that electrifies a whole assembly, eloquence which shakes the forum, and poetry which carries men up to the third heaven. But in painting it is different; it is all become a mystery, the secret of which is lodged in a few connoisseurs, whose object is not to praise the works of such painters as produce effect on mankind at large, but to class them according to their proficiency in the inferior rules of the art, which, though most necessary to be taught and learned, should yet only be considered as the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the steps by which the higher and ultimate object of a great popular effect is to be attained. They have all embraced the very style of criticism which induced Michael Angelo to call some Pope a poor creature, when, turning his attention from the general effect of a noble statue, his Holiness began to criticise the hem of the robe. This seems to me the cause of the decay of this delightful art, especially in history, its noblest branch. As I speak to myself, I may say that a painting should, to be excellent, have

something to say to the mind of a man, like myself, well educated, and susceptible of those feelings which anything strongly recalling natural emotion is likely to inspire. But how seldom do I see anything that moves me much! Wilkie, the far more than Teniers of Scotland, certainly gave many new ideas. So does Will Allan, though overwhelmed with their remarks about coloring and grouping, against which they are not willing to place his general and original merits. Landseer's dogs were the most magnificent things I ever saw — leaping, and bounding, and grinning on the canvas. Leslie has great powers; and the scenes from Molière by Newton are excellent. Yet painting wants a regenerator — some one who will sweep the cobwebs out of his head before he takes the palette, as Chantrey has done in the sister art. At present we are painting pictures from the ancients, as authors in the days of Louis Quatorze wrote epic poems according to the recipe of Dacier and Co. The poor reader or spectator has no remedy; the compositions are *secundum artem;* and if he does not like them, he is no judge, that 's all.

February 14. — I had a call from Glengarry yesterday, as kind and friendly as usual.[1] This gentleman is a kind of Quixote in our age, having retained, in their full extent, the whole feelings of clanship and chieftainship, elsewhere so long abandoned. He seems to have lived a century too late, and to exist, in a state of complete law and order, like a Glengarry of old, whose will was law to his sept. Warm-hearted, generous, friendly, he is beloved by those who know him, and his efforts are unceasing to show kindness to those of his clan who are disposed fully to admit his pretensions. To dispute them, is to incur his resentment, which has sometimes broken out in acts of violence which have brought him

[1] Colonel Ranaldson Macdonell of Glengarry. He died in January, 1828.

into collision with the law. To me he is a treasure, as being full of information as to the history of his own clan, and the manners and customs of the Highlanders in general. Strong, active, and muscular, he follows the chase of the deer for days and nights together, sleeping in his plaid when darkness overtakes him. The number of his singular exploits would fill a volume; for, as his pretensions are high, and not always willingly yielded to, he is every now and then giving rise to some rumor. He is, on many of these occasions, as much sinned against as sinning; for men, knowing his temper, sometimes provoke him, conscious that Glengarry, from his character for violence, will always be put in the wrong by the public. I have seen him behave in a very manly manner when thus tempted. He has of late prosecuted a quarrel, ridiculous enough in the present day, to have himself admitted and recognized as Chief of the whole Clan Ranald, or surname of Macdonald. The truth seems to be, that the present Clanranald is not descended from a legitimate chieftain of the tribe; for, having accomplished a revolution in the sixteenth century, they adopted a Tanist, or Captain, that is, a Chief not in the direct line of succession — namely, a certain Ian Moidart, or John of Moidart, who took the title of Captain of Clanranald, with all the powers of Chief; and even Glengarry's ancestor recognized them as chiefs *de facto*, if not *de jure*. The fact is, that this elective power was, in cases of insanity, imbecility, or the like, exercised by the Celtic tribes; and though Ian Moidart was no chief by birth, yet by election he became so, and transmitted his power to his descendant, as would King William III., if he had had any. So it is absurd to set up the *jus sanguinis* now, which Glengarry's ancestors did not, or could not, make good, when it was a right worth combating for.[1] — I wrought out my full task yesterday.

[1] [Scott also says that Glengarry "was fortunate in marrying a daughter of Sir William Forbes, who, by yielding to his peculiar ideas in general,

Saw Cadell as I returned from the Court. He seemed dejected, and gloomy about the extent of stock of novels, etc., on hand. He infected me with his want of spirits, and I almost wish my wife had not asked Mr. Scrope and Charles K. Sharpe for this day. But the former sent such loads of game that Lady Scott's gratitude became ungovernable.[1] I have not seen a creature at dinner since the direful 17th of January, except my own family and Mr. Laidlaw. The love of solitude increases by indulgence; I hope it will not diverge into misanthropy. It does not mend the matter that this is the first day that a ticket for sale is on my house, poor No. 39. One gets accustomed even to stone walls, and the place suited me very well. All our furniture, too, is to go — a hundred little articles that seemed to me connected with all the happier years of my life. It is a sorry business. But *sursum corda.*

My two friends came as expected, also Missie, and stayed till half-past ten. Promised Sharpe the set of Piranesi's views in the dining-parlor. They belonged to my uncle, so I do not like to sell them.

possesses much deserved influence with him." By this marriage he was closely related to some of Sir Walter's dearest friends. In an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September, 1893, *Glengarry and His Family*, a daughter of Colonel Macdonell gives some interesting reminiscences of her childhood and of the household life of this belated Highland chief. She also publishes some verses, *Glengarry's Death-Song*, which she says Scott sent to her mother, soon after her father's death.]

[1] I transcribe a letter from Sir Walter, on an occasion of this sort, from the first chapter of Mr. Scrope's *Art of Deer-Stalking*: —

"Thanks, dear sir, for your venison, for finer or fatter
Never roam'd in a forest, or smoked in a platter."

"Your superb haunch arrived in excellent time to feast a new married couple, the Douglases of M——, and was pronounced by far the finest that could by possibility have been seen in Teviotdale since Chevy Chase. I did not venture on the carving, being warned both by your hints, and the example of old Robert Sinclair, who used to say that he had thirty friends during a fortnight's residence at Harrowgate, and lost them all in the carving of one haunch of venison; so I put Lockhart on the duty, and, as the haunch was too large to require strict economy, he hacked and hewed it well enough."

February 15. — Yesterday I did not write a line of Woodstock. Partly, I was a little out of spirits, though that would not have hindered. Partly, I wanted to wait for some new ideas — a sort of collecting of straw to make bricks of. Partly, I was a little too far beyond the press. I cannot pull well in long traces, when the draught is too far behind me. I love to have the press thumping, clattering, and banging in my rear; it creates the necessity which almost always makes me work best. Needs must when the devil drives — and drive he does even according to the letter. I must work to-day, however. — Attended a meeting of the Faculty about our new library. I spoke — saying that I hoped we would now at length act upon a general plan, and look forward to commencing upon such a scale as might secure us at least for a century against the petty and partial management, which we have hitherto thought sufficient, of fitting up one room after another. Disconnected and distant, these have been costing large sums of money from time to time, all now thrown away. We are now to have space enough for a very large range of buildings, which we may execute in a simple taste, leaving Government to ornament them if they shall think proper — otherwise to be plain, modest, and handsome, and capable of being executed by degrees, and in such portions as convenience may admit of.

Poor James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, came to advise with me about his affairs, — he is sinking under the times; having no assistance to give him, my advice, I fear, will be of little service. I am sorry for him if that would help him, especially as, by his own account, a couple of hundred pounds would carry him on.

February 16. — "Misfortune's gowling bark"[1] comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to trustees for behoof of creditors, with two works in pro-

[1] Burns's *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.*

gress and nigh publication, and with all my future literary labors, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment, which could not exist without my exertions, and that thus far I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence. I therefore supposed, on selling this house, and various other property, and on receiving the price of Woodstock and Napoleon, that they would give me leisure to make other exertions, and be content with the rents of Abbotsford, without attempting a sale. This would have been the more reasonable, as the very printing of these works must amount to a large sum, of which they will touch the profits. In the course of this delay I supposed I was to have the chance of getting some insight both into Constable's affairs and those of Hurst and Robinson. Nay, employing these houses, under precautions, to sell the works, the publisher's profit would have come in to pay part of their debt. But Gibson last night came in after dinner, and gave me to understand that the Bank of Scotland see this in a different point of view, and consider my contribution of the produce of past, present, and future labors, as compensated *in full* by their accepting of the trust-deed, instead of pursuing the mode of sequestration, and placing me in the Gazette. They therefore expect the trustees to commence a lawsuit to reduce the marriage-settlement which settles the estate upon Walter; thus loading me with a most expensive suit, and I suppose selling library and whatever else they can lay hold on.

Now this seems unequal measure, and would besides of itself totally destroy any power of fancy — of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me. A man cannot write in the House of Correction; and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened would render it impossible for one to help himself or others. So I told Gibson I had my mind made up as far back as the 24th of January, not to suffer myself to be harder pressed than law would press me. If this great commer-

cial company, through whose hands I have directed so many thousands, think they are right in taking every advantage and giving none, it must be my care to see that they take none but what the law gives them. If they take the sword of the law, I must lay hold of the shield. If they are determined to consider me as an irretrievable bankrupt, they have no title to object to my settling upon the usual terms which the Statute requires. They probably are of opinion, that I will be ashamed to do this by applying publicly for a sequestration. Now, my feelings are different. I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay; but I am not ashamed of being classed with those to whose rank I belong. The disgrace is in being an actual bankrupt, not in being made a legal one. I had like to have been too hasty in this matter. I must have a clear understanding that I am to be benefited or indulged in some way, if I bring in two such funds as those works in progress, worth certainly from £10,000 to £15,000.

February 17. — Slept sound, for nature repays herself for the vexation the mind sometimes gives her. This morning put interlocutors on several Sheriff-court processes from Selkirkshire. Gibson came to-night to say that he had spoken at full length with Alexander Monypenny, proposed as trustee on the part of the Bank of Scotland, and found him decidedly in favor of the most moderate measures, and taking burden on himself that the Bank would proceed with such lenity as might enable me to have some time and opportunity to clear these affairs out. I repose trust in Mr. M. entirely. His father, Colonel Monypenny, was my early friend, kind and hospitable to me when I was a mere boy. He had much of old General Withers about him, as expressed in Pope's epitaph —

> "O worth in youth approved,
> O soft humanity in age beloved!"

His son David, and a younger brother, Frank, a soldier, who perished by drowning on a boating party from Gibraltar, were my schoolfellows; and with the survivor, now Lord Pitmilly, I have always kept up a friendly intercourse. Of this gentleman, on whom my fortunes are to depend, I know little. He was Colin Mackenzie's partner in business while my friend pursued it, and he speaks highly of him: that 's a great deal. He is secretary to the Pitt Club, and we have had all our lives the habit *idem sentire de republica:* that 's much too. Lastly, he is a man of perfect honor and reputation; and I have nothing to ask which such a man would not either grant or convince me was unreasonable. I have, to be sure, something of a constitutional and hereditary obstinacy; but it is in me a dormant quality. Convince my understanding, and I am perfectly docile; stir my passions by coldness or affronts, and the devil would not drive me from my purpose. Let me record, I have striven against this besetting sin. When I was a boy, and on foot expeditions, as we had many, no creature could be so indifferent which way our course was directed, and I acquiesced in what any one proposed; but if I was once driven to make a choice, and felt piqued in honor to maintain my proposition, I have broken off from the whole party, rather than yield to any one. Time has sobered this pertinacity of mind; but it still exists, and I must be on my guard against it. It is the same with me in politics. In general I care very little about the matter, and from year's end to year's end have scarce a thought connected with them, except to laugh at the fools who think to make themselves great men out of little by swaggering in the rear of a party. But either actually important events, or such as seemed so by their close neighborhood to me, have always hurried me off my feet, and made me, as I have sometimes regretted, more forward and more violent than those who had a regular jog-trot way of busying themselves in public

matters. Good luck; for had I lived in troublesome times, and chanced to be on the unhappy side, I had been hanged to a certainty. What I have always remarked has been, that many who have hallooed me on at public meetings, and so forth, have quietly left me to the odium which a man known to the public always has more than his own share of; while, on the other hand, they were easily successful in pressing before me, who never pressed forward at all, when there was any distribution of public favors or the like. I am horribly tempted to interfere in this business of altering the system of banks in Scotland; and yet I know that if I can attract any notice, I will offend my English friends, without propitiating our doom in Scotland. I will think of it till to-morrow. It is making myself of too much importance, after all.

February 18. — I set about Malachi Malagrowther's Letter on the late disposition to change everything in Scotland to an English model, but without resolving about the publication. They do treat us very provokingly.

> "O Land of *Cakes !* said the *Northern* bard,
> Though all the world betrays thee,
> One faithful pen thy rights shall guard,
> One faithful harp shall praise thee." [1]

February 19. — Finished my letter (Malachi Malagrowther) this morning, and sent it to James B., who is to call with the result this forenoon. I am not very anxious to get on with Woodstock. I want to see what Constable's people mean to do when they have their trustee. For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal pretence.

[1] A parody on Moore's *Minstrel Boy*.

Being troubled with thick-coming fancies, and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain — curious, but dull, from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. It passes the time, however, especially in that listless mood when your mind is half on your book, half on something else. You catch something to arrest the attention every now and then, and what you miss is not worth going back upon; idle man's studies, in short. Still, things occur to one. Something might be made of a tale of chivalry, — taken from the Passage of Arms, which Jacques de Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth.[1] The first mention perhaps of red-hot balls appears in the siege of Oudenarde by the Citizens of Ghent — Chronique, p. 293. This would be light summer work.

J. B. came and sat an hour. I led him to talk of Woodstock; and, to say truth, his approbation did me much good. I am aware it *may*, nay, *must* be partial; yet he is Tom Tell-truth, and totally unable to disguise his real feelings. I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an underbred fellow who, after eating a cherry-tart, proceeded to lick the plate. But when one is flagging, a little praise (if it can be had genuine and unadulterated by flattery, which is as difficult to come by as the genuine mountain dew) is a cordial after all. So now — *vamos corazon* — let us atone for the loss of the morning.

February 20. — Yesterday, though late in beginning, I nearly finished my task, which is six of my close pages, about thirty pages of print, a full and uninterrupted day's work. To-day I have already written four, and

[1] This hint was taken up in *Count Robert of Paris*.

with some confidence. Thus does flattery or praise oil the wheels. It is but two o'clock. Skene was here remonstrating against my taking apartments at the Albyn Club,[1] and recommending that I should rather stay with them. I told him that was altogether impossible. I hoped to visit them often, but for taking a permanent residence, I was altogether the Country Mouse, and voted for

> "A hollow tree,
> A crust of bread and liberty."[2]

The chain of friendship, however bright, does not stand the attrition of constant close contact.[3]

February 21. — Corrected the proofs of Malachi this morning; it may fall dead, and there will be a squib lost; it may chance to light on some ingredients of national feeling and set folk's beards in a blaze — and so much the better if it does. I mean, better for Scotland — not a whit for me. Attended the hearing in Parliament House till near four o'clock, so I shall do little to-night, for I am tired and sleepy. One person talking for a long time, whether in pulpit, or at the bar, or anywhere else, unless the interest be great, and the eloquence of the highest character, sets me to sleep. I impudently lean my head on my hand in the Court, and take my nap without shame. The Lords may keep awake and mind their own affairs. *Quod supra nos nihil ad nos.* These clerks' stools are certainly as easy seats as are in Scotland, those of the Barons of the Exchequer always excepted.

[1] This was a club-house on the London plan, in Princes Street, a little eastward from the Mound. On its dissolution soon afterwards Sir W. was elected by acclamation into the *elder* society called the *New Club*, who had then their house in St. Andrew's Square.

[2] Pope's *Imitation of Horace*, Book II. Sat. 6.

[3] [Mr. Skene's house was No. 126 Princes Street. Most of Scott's friends lived not far from "No. 39."]

February 22. — Ballantyne breakfasted, and is to negotiate about Malachi with Blackwood. It reads not amiss; and if I can get a few guineas for it, I shall not be ashamed to take them; for, paying Lady Scott, I have just left between £3 and £4 for any necessary occasion, and my salary does not become due until 20th March, and the expense of removing, etc., is to be provided for: —

"But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?"

The mere scarcity of money (so that actual wants are provided) is not poverty — it is the bitter draught to owe money which we cannot pay. Labored fairly at Woodstock to-day, but principally in revising and adding to Malachi, of which an edition as a pamphlet is anxiously desired. I have lugged in my old friend Cardrona[1] — I hope it will not be thought unkindly. The Banks are anxious to have it published. They were lately exercising lenity towards me, and if I can benefit them, it will be an instance of the "King's errand lying in the cadger's gate."

February 23. — Corrected two sheets of Woodstock this morning. These are not the days of idleness. The fact is, that the not seeing company gives me a command of my time which I possessed at no other period in my life, at least since I knew how to make some use of my leisure. There is a great pleasure in sitting down to write with the consciousness that nothing will occur during the day to break the spell. Detained in the Court till past three, and came home just in time to escape a terrible squall. I am a good deal jaded, and will not work till after dinner. There is a sort of drowsy vacillation of

[1] The late Mr. Williamson of Cardrona, in Peeblesshire, was a strange humorist, of whom Sir Walter told many stories. The allusion here is to the anecdote of the *Leetle Anderson* in the first of Malachi's Epistles. See Scott's *Prose Miscellanies*, vol. xxi. p. 289.

mind attends fatigue with me. I can command my pen as the school-copy recommends, but cannot equally command my thoughts, and often write one word for another. Read a little volume called The Omen — very well written — deep and powerful language.[1]

February 24. — Went down to printing-office after the Court, and corrected Malachi. J. B. reproaches me with having taken much more pains in this temporary pamphlet than on works which have a greater interest on my fortunes. I have certainly bestowed enough of revision and correction. But the cases are different. In a novel or poem I run the course alone — here I am taking up the cudgels, and may expect a drubbing in return. Besides, I do feel that this is public matter in which the country is deeply interested; and, therefore, is far more important than anything referring to my fame or fortune alone. The pamphlet will soon be out — meantime Malachi prospers and excites much attention. The Banks have bespoke 500 copies. The country is taking the alarm; and, I think, the Ministers will not dare to press the measure. I should rejoice to see the old red lion ramp a little, and the thistle again claim its *nemo me impune*. I do believe Scotsmen will show themselves unanimous at last, where their cash is concerned. They shall not want backing. I incline to cry with Biron in Love's Labour 's Lost, —

"More Atés, more Atés, stir them on."

I suppose all imaginative people feel more or less of excitation from a scene of insurrection or tumult, or of general expression of national feeling. When I was a lad, poor Davie Douglas[2] used to accuse me of being

[1] *The Omen*, by Mr. Galt, had just been published. See Sir Walter's review of this novel in his *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xviii. p. 333, or in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July, 1826. (John Galt died at Greenock in April, 1839.)

[2] Lord Reston. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 24.

cupidus novarum rerum, and say that I loved the stimulus of a broil. It might be so then, and even still —

"Even in our ashes live their wonted fires." [1]

Whimsical enough, that when I was trying to animate Scotland against the currency bill, John Gibson brought me the deed of trust, assigning my whole estate, to be subscribed by me; so that I am turning patriot, and taking charge of the affairs of the country, on the very day I proclaim myself incapable of managing my own. What of that? Who would think of their own trumpery debts, when they are taking the support of the whole system of Scottish banking on their shoulders? Odd enough too — on this day, for the first time since the awful 17th January, we entertain a party at dinner — Lady Anna Maria Elliot,[2] W. Clerk, John A. Murray,[3] and Thomas Thomson — as if we gave a dinner on account of my *cessio fori*.

February 25. — Our party yesterday went off very gayly; much laugh and fun, and I think I enjoyed it more from the rarity of the event — I mean from having seen society at home so seldom of late. My head aches slightly though; yet we were but a bottle of champagne, one of port, one of old sherry, and two of claret, among four gentlemen and three ladies. I have been led, from this incident, to think of taking chambers near Clerk, in Rose Court. Methinks the retired situation should suit me well. Then a man and woman would be my whole establishment. My superfluous furniture might serve, and I could ask a friend or two to dinner, as I have been accustomed to do. I shall look at the place to-day. I must set now to a second epistle of Malachi to the

[1] Gray's *Elegy*.

[2] Now Lady A. M. Donkin.

[3] Afterwards Lord Advocate, and now a Judge of Session by the title of Lord Murray. — (1839.) [He died in 1859.]

Athenians. If I can but get the sulky Scottish spirit set up, the devil won't turn them.

> "Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush;
> We 'll over the Border, and give them a brush;
> There 's somebody there we 'll teach better behavior;
> Hey, Johnnie, lad, cock up your beaver."

February 26. — Spent the morning and till dinner on Malachi's second epistle. It is difficult to steer betwixt the natural impulse of one's national feelings setting in one direction, and the prudent regard to the interests of the empire and its internal peace and quiet, recommending less vehement expression. I will endeavor to keep sight of both. But were my own interest alone concerned, d—n me but I would give it them hot! Had some valuable communications from Colin Mackenzie, which will supply my plentiful lack of facts.

Received an anonymous satire in doggerel, which, having read the first verse and last, I committed to the flames. — Peter Murray, son of the clever Lord Elibank, called, and sat half-an-hour — an old friend, and who, from the peculiarity and originality of his genius, is one of the most entertaining companions I have ever known. But I must finish Malachi.

February 27. — Malachi is getting on; I must finish him to-night. I dare say some of my London friends will be displeased — Canning perhaps, for he is *engoué* of Huskisson. Can't help it. — The place I looked at won't do; but I must really get some lodging, for, reason or none, Dalgleish will not leave me, and cries and makes a scene.[1] Now, if I stayed alone in a little set of chambers, he would serve greatly for my accommodation. There are some places of the kind in the New Buildings; but they are distant from the Court, and I cannot walk well on the pavement. It is odd enough, that just when

[1] Dalgleish was Sir Walter's butler. He said he cared not how much his wages were reduced — but go he would not.

I had made a resolution to use my coach frequently, I ceased to keep one.

February 28. — Completed Malachi to-day. It is more serious than the first, and in some places perhaps too peppery. Never mind; if you would have a horse kick, make a crupper out of a whin-cow;[1] and I trust to see Scotland kick and fling to some purpose. Woodstock lies back for this. But *quid non pro patria?*

March 1. — Malachi is in the Edinburgh Journal to-day, and reads like the work of an uncompromising right-forward Scot of the old school. Some of the cautious and pluckless instigators will be afraid of their confederate; for if a man of some energy and openness of character happens to be on the same side with these jobbers, they stand as much in awe of his vehemence as did the inexperienced conjurer who invoked a fiend whom he could not manage. Came home in a heavy shower with the Solicitor. I tried him on the question, but found him reserved. The future Lord Advocate must be cautious; but I can tell my good friend John Hope, that if he acts the part of a firm and resolute Scottish patriot, both his own country and England will respect him the more. Ah! Hal Dundas, there was no truckling in thy day!

Looked out a quantity of things, to go to Abbotsford; for we are flitting, if you please. It is with a sense of pain that I leave behind a parcel of trumpery prints and little ornaments, once the pride of Lady S——'s heart, but which she sees consigned with indifference to the chance of an auction. Things that have had their day of importance with me I cannot forget, though the merest trifles. But I am glad that she, with bad health, and enough to vex her, has not the same useless mode of associating recollections with this unpleasant business.

[1] *Whin-cow* — Anglicè, a bush of furze.

The best part of it is the necessity of leaving behind, namely, getting rid of, a set of most wretched daubs of landscapes, in great gilded frames, of which I have often been heartily ashamed. The history of them was curious. An amateur artist (a lady) happened to fall into misfortunes, upon which her landscapes, the character of which had been buoyed up far beyond their proper level, sank now beneath it, and it was low enough. One most amiable and accomplished old lady continued to encourage her pencil, and to order pictures after pictures, which she sent in presents to her friends. I suppose I have eight or ten of them, which I could not avoid accepting. There will be plenty of laughing when they come to be sold. It would be a good joke enough to cause it to be circulated that they were performances of my own in early youth, and looked on and bought up as curiosities. —— Do you know why you have written all this down, Sir W.? You want to put off writing Woodstock, just as easily done as these memoranda, but which it happens your duty and your prudence recommend, and therefore you are loath to begin.

"Heigho,
I can't say no;
But this piece of task-work off I can stave, O,
For Malachi's posting into an octavo;
To correct the proof sheets only this night I have, O,
So Conscience you 've gotten as good as you gave, O;
But to-morrow a new day we 'll better behave, O,
So I lay down the pen, and your pardon I crave, O."

March 2. — I have a letter from Colin Mackenzie, approving Malachi, — "Cold men may say it is too strong; but from the true men of Scotland you are sure of the warmest gratitude." I never have yet found, nor do I expect it on this occasion, that ill-will dies in debt, or what is called gratitude distresses herself by frequent payments. The one is like a ward-holding, and pays its reddendo in hard blows. The other a blanch-tenure, and

is discharged for payment of a red rose, or a peppercorn. He that takes the forlorn hope in an attack is often deserted by them that should support him, and who generally throw the blame of their own cowardice upon his rashness. We shall see this end in the same way. But I foresaw it from the beginning. The bankers will be persuaded that it is a squib which may burn their own fingers, and will curse the poor pyrotechnist that compounded it; — if they do, they be d——d. Slept indifferently, and dreamed of Napoleon's last moments, of which I was reading a medical account last night, by Dr. Arnott. Horrible death — a cancer on the pylorus. I would have given something to have lain still this morning and made up for lost time. But *desidiæ valedixi*. If you once turn on your side after the hour at which you ought to rise, it is all over. Bolt up at once. Bad night last — the next is sure to be better.

> "When the drum beats, make ready;
> When the fife plays, march away —
> To the roll-call, to the roll-call, to the roll-call,
> Before the break of day."

Dined with Chief-Commissioner: Admiral Adam, W. Clerk, Thomson, and I. The excellent old man was cheerful at intervals — at times sad, as was natural. A good blunder, he told us, occurred in the Annandale case, which was a question partly of domicile. It was proved, that leaving Lochwood, the Earl had given up his *kain* and *carriages*;[1] this an English counsel contended was the best of all possible proofs that the noble Earl designed an absolute change of residence, since he laid aside his *walking-stick* and his *coach*. First epistle of Malachi out of print already.

March 3. — Could not get the last sheets of Malachi, Second Epistle, so they must go out to the world uncor-

[1] *Kain*, in Scotch law, means payment in *kind* — *Carriages*, in the same phraseology, stands for services in driving with horse and cart.

rected — a great loss, for the last touches are always most effectual; and I expect misprints in the additional matter. We were especially obliged to have it out this morning that it may operate as a gentle preparative for the meeting of inhabitants at two o'clock. *Vogue la galère* — we shall see if Scotsmen have any pluck left. If not, they may kill the next Percy themselves. It is ridiculous enough for me, in a state of insolvency for the present, to be battling about gold and paper currency — it is something like the humorous touch in Hogarth's Distressed Poet, where the poor starveling of the Muses is engaged, when in the abyss of poverty, in writing an Essay on Payment of the National Debt; and his wall is adorned with a plan of the mines of Peru. Nevertheless, even these fugitive attempts, from the success which they have had, and the noise they are making, serve to show the truth of the old proverb —

> "When house and land are gone and spent,
> Then learning is most excellent."

On the whole, I am glad of this brulzie, as far as I am concerned; people will not dare talk of me as an object of pity — no more "poor-manning." Who asks how many punds Scots the old champion had in his pocket when

> "He set a bugle to his mouth,
> And blew so loud and shrill,
> The trees in greenwood shook thereat,
> Sae loud rang ilka hill?" [1]

This sounds conceited enough, yet is not far from truth.

The meeting was very numerous, — five hundred or six hundred at least, and unanimous, saving one Mr. Howden, who having been all his life, as I am told, in bitter opposition to Ministers, proposed on the present occasion that the whole contested measure should be trusted to their wisdom. I suppose he chose the opportunity of placing his own opinion in opposition, single opposition too, to one of a large assembly. The speaking was very

[1] Ballad of *Hardyknute*, slightly altered.

moderate. Report had said that Jeffrey, J. A. Murray, and other sages of the economical school, were to unbuckle their mails, and give us their opinions. But no such great guns appeared. If they had, having the multitude on my side, I would have tried to break a lance with them. A few short, but well-expressed resolutions were adopted unanimously. These were proposed by Lord Rollo, and seconded by Sir James Fergusson, Bart. I was named one of a committee to encourage all sorts of opposition to the measure. So I have already broken through two good and wise resolutions — one, that I would not write on political controversy; another, that I would not be named in public committees. If my good resolves go this way, like *snaw aff a dyke* — the Lord help me!

March 4. — Last night I had a letter from Lockhart, who, speaking of Malachi, says, "The Ministers are sore beyond imagination at present; and some of them, I hear, have felt this new whip on the raw to some purpose." I conclude he means Canning is offended. I can't help it, as I said before — *fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.* No cause in which I had the slightest personal interest should have made me use my pen against them, blunt and pointed as it may be. But as they are about to throw this country into distress and danger, by a measure of useless and uncalled-for experiment, they must hear the opinion of the Scotsman, to whom it is of no other consequence than as a general measure affecting the country at large — and more they *shall* hear. I had determined to lay down the pen. But now they shall have another of Malachi, beginning with buffoonery, and ending as seriously as I can write it. It is like a frenzy that they will agitate the upper and middling classes of society, so very friendly to them, with unnecessary and hazardous projects.

"Oh, thus it was they loved them dear,
And sought how to requite 'em,

And having no friends left but they,
They did resolve to fight them."

The country is very high just now. England may carry the measure if she will, doubtless. But what will be the consequence of the distress ensuing, God only can foretell.

Lockhart, moreover, inquires about my affairs anxiously, and asks what he is to say about them; says "he has inquiries every day; kind, most kind all, and among the most interested and anxious, Sir William Knighton, who told me the King was quite melancholy all the evening he heard of it." *This* I can well believe, for the King, educated as a prince, has nevertheless as true and kind a heart as any subject in his dominions. He goes on: "I do think they would give you a Baron's gown as soon as possible," etc. I have written to him in answer, showing I have enough to carry me on, and can dedicate my literary efforts to clear my land. The preferment would suit me well, and the late Duke of Buccleuch gave me his interest for it. I dare say the young Duke would do the same, for the invaried love I have borne his house; and by and by he will have a voice potential. But there is Sir William Rae, whose prevailing claim I would never place my own in opposition to, even were it possible, by a *tour de force*, such as L. points at, to set it aside. Meantime, I am building a barrier betwixt me and promotion.

In the mean while, now I am not pulled about for money, etc., methinks I am happier without my wealth than with it. Everything is paid. I have no one anxious to *make up a sum*, and writing for his account to be paid. Since 17th January, I have not laid out a guinea, out of my own hand, save two or three in charity, and six shillings for a pocketbook. But the cash with which I set out having run short for family expenses, I drew on Blackwood, through Ballantyne, which was honored, for £25, to account of Malachi's Letters, of which

another edition of one thousand is ordered, and gave it to Lady Scott, because our removal will require that in hand. On the 20th my quarter comes in, and though I have something to pay out of it, I shall be on velvet for expense — and regular I will be. Methinks all trifling objects of expenditure seem to grow light in my eyes. That I may regain independence, I must be saving. But ambition awakes, as love of indulgence dies and is mortified within me. "Dark Cuthullin will be renowned or dead."[1]

March 5. — Something of toddy and cigar in that last quotation, I think. Yet I only smoked two, and liquefied with one glass of spirits and water. I have sworn I will not blot out what I have once written here.

March 6. — Finished third Malachi, which I don't much like. It respects the difficulty of finding gold to replace the paper circulation. Now this should have been considered first. The admitting that the measure may be imposed, is yielding up the question, and Malachi is like a commandant who should begin to fire from interior defences before his outworks were carried. If Ballantyne be of my own opinion, I will suppress it. We are all in a bustle shifting things to Abbotsford. It is odd, but I don't feel the impatience for the country which I have usually experienced.

March 7. — Detained in the Court till *three* by a hearing. Then to the committee appointed at the meeting on Friday, to look after the small-note business. A pack of old *fainéants*, incapable of managing such a business, and who will lose the day from mere coldness of heart. There are about a thousand names at the petition. They have added no designations — a great blunder; for *testimonia sunt ponderanda non numeranda* should never be

[1] Ossian.

lost sight of. They are disconcerted and helpless; just as in the business of the King's visit, when everybody threw the weight on me. In another time — so disgusted was I with seeing them sitting in ineffectual helplessness, spitting on the hot iron that lay before them, and touching it with a timid finger, as if afraid of being scalded, that I might have dashed in and taken up the hammer, summoned the deacons and other heads of public bodies, and by consulting them have carried them with me. But I cannot waste my time, health, and spirits, in fighting thankless battles. I left them in a quarter of an hour, and presage, unless the country make an alarm, the cause is lost. The philosophical reviewers manage their affairs better — hold off — avoid committing themselves, but throw their *vis inertiæ* into the opposite scale, and neutralize feelings which they cannot combat. To force them to fight on disadvantageous ground is our policy. But we have more sneakers after ministerial favor, than men who love their country, and who, upon a liberal scale, would serve their party. For to force the Whigs to avow an unpopular doctrine in popular assemblies, or to wrench the government of such bodies from them, would be a *coup de maître*. But they are alike destitute of manly resolution and sound policy. D—n the whole nest of them! I have corrected the last of Malachi, and let the thing take its chance. I have made just enemies enough, and indisposed enough of friends.

March 8. — At the Court, though a teind day. A foolish thing happened while the Court were engaged with the teinds. I amused myself with writing on a sheet of paper, notes on Frederick Maitland's account of the capture of Buonaparte, and I have lost these notes — shuffled in perhaps among my own papers, or those of the teind clerks. What a curious document to be found in a process of valuation. Being jaded and sleepy, I took up Le Duc de Guise on Naples. I think this, with

the old Memoirs on the same subject which I have at Abbotsford, would enable me to make a pretty essay for the Quarterly.[1] We must take up Woodstock now in good earnest. Mr. Cowan, a good and able man, is chosen trustee in Constable's affairs, with full power. From what I hear, the poor man Constable is not sensible of the nature of his own situation; for myself, I have succeeded in putting the matter perfectly out of my mind since I cannot help it, and have arrived at a flocci-pauci-nihili-pili-fication of misery, and I thank whoever invented that long word. They are removing our wine, etc., to the carts, and you will judge if our flitting is not making a noise in the world, or in the street at least.

March 9. — I foresaw justly,

> "When first I set this dangerous stone a-rolling,
> 'T would fall upon myself." [2]

Sir Robert Dundas to-day put into my hands a letter of between twenty and forty pages, in angry and bitter reprobation of Malachi, full of general averments, and very untenable arguments, all written *at* me by name, but of which I am to have no copy, and which is to be circulated to other special friends, to whom it may be necessary "to give the sign to hate." I got it at two o'clock, and returned it with an answer four hours afterwards, in which I have studied not to be tempted into either sarcastic or harsh expressions. A quarrel it is, however, in all the forms, between my old friend and myself, and his Lordship's reprimand is to be *read out in order* to all our friends. They all know what I have said is true, but that will be nothing to the purpose if they are desired to consider it as false. Nobody at least can plague me for interest with Lord Melville as they

[1] ["The Reviewal then meditated was afterward published [for Gillies's benefit] in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. iv. p. 355, but not included in the *Miscellaneous Prose Works*." *Abbotsford Library Catalogue*, p. 36.]

[2] *King Henry VIII.* Act V. Scene 3.

used to do. By the way, from the tone of his letter, I think his Lordship will give up the measure, and I shall be the peace-offering. All will agree to condemn me as too warm — *too rash* — and yet rejoice in privileges which they would not have been able to save but for a little rousing of spirit, which will not perhaps fall asleep again. — A gentleman called on the part of a Captain Rutherford, to make inquiry about the Lord Rutherfords. Not being very *cleever*, as John Fraser used to say, at these pedigree matters, referred him to my cousin Robert Rutherford. Very odd — when there is a vacant, or dormant title in a Scottish family or *name*, everybody, and all connected with the clan, conceive they have *quodam modo* a right to it. Not being engrossed by any individual, it communicates part of its lustre to every individual in the tribe, as if it remained in common stock for that purpose.

March 10. — I am not made entirely on the same mould of passions like other people. Many men would deeply regret a breach with so old a friend as Lord Melville, and many men would be in despair at losing the good graces of a Minister of State for Scotland, and all pretty views about what might be done for myself and my sons, especially Charles. But I think my good Lord doth ill to be angry, like the patriarch of old, and I have, in my odd *sans souciance* character, a good handful of meal from the grist of the Jolly Miller, who

> "once
> Dwelled on the river Dee;
> I care for nobody, no not I,
> Since nobody cares for me."

Sandie Young[1] came in at breakfast-time with a Monsieur Brocque of Montpelier. Saw Sir Robert Dundas at Court. He is to send my letter to Lord Melville.

[1] Alexander Young, Esq., of Harburn — a steady Whig of the old school, and a steady and highly esteemed friend of Sir Walter's.

Colin Mackenzie concurs in thinking Lord M. quite wrong. *He must cool in the skin he het in.*

On coming home from the Court a good deal fatigued, I took a nap in my easy-chair, then packed my books, and committed the refuse to Jock Stevenson —

"Left not a limb on which a Dane could triumph."

Gave Mr. Gibson my father's cabinet, which suits a man of business well. Gave Jock Stevenson the picture of my favorite dog Camp, mentioned in one of the introductions to Marmion, and a little crow-quill drawing of Melrose Abbey by Nelson, whom I used to call the Admiral, poor fellow. He had some ingenuity, and was in a moderate way a good penman and draughtsman. He left his situation of amanuensis to go into Lord Home's militia regiment, but his dissipation got the better of a strong constitution, and he fell into bad habits and poverty, and died, I believe, in the Hospital at Liverpool. — Strange enough that Henry Weber, who acted afterwards as my amanuensis for many years, had also a melancholy fate ultimately. He was a man of very superior attainments, an excellent linguist and geographer, and a remarkable antiquary. He published a collection of ancient Romances, superior, I think, to the elaborate Ritson. He also published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, but too carelessly done to be reputable. He was a violent Jacobin, which he thought he disguised from me, while I, who cared not a fig about the poor young man's politics, used to amuse myself with teasing him. He was an excellent and affectionate creature, but unhappily was afflicted with partial insanity, especially if he used strong liquors, to which, like others with that unhappy tendency, he was occasionally addicted. In 1814 he became quite insane, and, at the risk of my life, I had to disarm him of a pair of loaded pistols, which I did by exerting the sort of authority which, I believe, gives an effectual control in such cases.[1] My patronage

[1] See *ante*, vol. iv. p. 100.

in this way has not been lucky to the parties protected. I hope poor George Huntly Gordon will escape the influence of the evil star. He has no vice, poor fellow, but his total deafness makes him helpless.

March 11. — This day the Court rose after a long and laborious sederunt. I employed the remainder of the day in completing a set of notes on Captain Maitland's manuscript narrative of the reception of Napoleon Buonaparte on board the Bellerophon. It had been previously in the hands of my friend Basil Hall, who had made many excellent corrections in point of style; but he had been hypercritical in wishing (in so important a matter, where everything depends on accuracy) this expression to be altered, for delicacy's sake — that to be corrected, for fear of giving offence — and that other to be abridged, for fear of being tedious. The plain sailor's narrative for me, written on the spot, and bearing in its minuteness the evidence of its veracity. Lord Elgin sent me, some time since, a curious account of his imprisonment in France, and the attempts which were made to draw him into some intrigue which might authorize treating him with rigor.[1] He called to-day and communicated some curious circumstances, on the authority of Fouché, Denon, and others, respecting Buonaparte and the Empress Maria Louisa, whom Lord Elgin had conversed with on the subject in Italy. His conduct towards her was something like that of Ethwald to Elburga, in Joanna Baillie's fine tragedy, making her postpone her high rank by birth to the authority which he had acquired by his talents.

March 12. — Resumed Woodstock, and wrote my task of six pages. I cannot *gurnalize*, however, having wrought my eyes nearly out.

[1] See *Life of Buonaparte — Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xi. pp. 346–351.

March 13. — Wrote to the end of a chapter, and knowing no more than the man in the moon what comes next, I will put down a few of Lord Elgin's remembrances, and something may occur to me in the mean while. . . .

I have hinted in these notes, that I am not entirely free from a sort of gloomy fits, with a fluttering of the heart and depression of spirits, just as if I knew not what was going to befall me. I can sometimes resist this successfully, but it is better to evade than to combat it. The hang-dog spirit may have originated in the confusion and chucking about of our old furniture, the stripping of walls of pictures, and rooms of ornaments; the leaving of a house we have so long called our home, is altogether melancholy enough. I am glad Lady S. does not mind it, and yet I wonder, too. She insists on my remaining till Wednesday, not knowing what I suffer. Meanwhile, to make my recusant spirit do penance, I have set to work to clear away papers and pack them for my journey. What a strange medley of thoughts such a task produces! There lie letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting — as are perhaps their writers — riddles which have been read — schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity — memorials of friendships and enmities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Saturn consume itself. To-day annihilates yesterday, as the old tyrant swallowed his children, and the snake its tail. But I must say to my Journal as poor Byron did to Moore, "D—n it, Tom, don't be poetical.'

March 14. — J. B. called this morning to take leave, and receive directions about proofs, etc. Talks of the uproar about Malachi; but I am tired of Malachi — the humor is off, and I have said what I wanted to say, and put the people of Scotland on their guard, as well as

Ministers, if they like to be warned.[1] They are gradually destroying what remains of nationality, and making the country *tabula rasa* for doctrines of bold innovation. Their loosening and grinding down all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen will throw the country into a state in which it will be universally turned to democracy, and instead of canny Saunders, they will have a very dangerous North-British neighborhood. Some lawyer expressed to Lord Elibank an opinion, that at the Union the English law should have been extended all over Scotland. "I cannot say how that might have answered our purpose," said Lord Patrick, who was never nonsuited for want of an answer, "but it would scarce have suited *yours*, since by this time the *Aberdeen Advocates*[2] would have possessed themselves of all the business in Westminster Hall."

What a detestable feeling this fluttering of the heart is! I know it is nothing organic, and that it is entirely nervous; but the sickening effects of it are dispiriting to a degree. Is it the body brings it on the mind, or the mind that inflicts it upon the body? I cannot tell; but it is a severe price to pay for the *Fata Morgana* with which Fancy sometimes amuses men of warm imaginations. As to body and mind, I fancy I might as well

[1] [A few days later, Sir Walter wrote of *Malachi:* "The thing has certainly had more effect than it deserves; and I suspect my Ministerial friends, if they love me less, will not hold me cheaper for the fight I have made. I am far from saying *oderint dum emerint*, but there is a great difference betwixt that and being a mere protégé, a poor broken-down man, who was to be assisted when existing circumstances, that most convenient of all apologies and happiest of all phrases, would permit." — *Journal*, vol. i. p. 160. In writing to Lady Louisa Stuart regarding the matter, Scott declares himself not at all sorry for the opportunity given him to say his say, for some of his friends had been "poor manning" him more than was meet for one who was asking, and through his life had asked, nothing for himself, though often a pleader for others. See *Selections from the Manuscripts of Lady Louisa Stuart*, p. 226.]

[2] The *Attorneys* of the town of Aberdeen are styled *Advocates*. This valuable privilege is said to have been bestowed at an early period by some (sportive) monarch.

inquire whether the fiddle or fiddlestick makes the tune. In youth this complaint used to throw me into involuntary passions of causeless tears. But I will drive it away in the country by exercise. I wish I had been a mechanic: a turning-lathe or a chest of tools would have been a Godsend; for thought makes the access of melancholy rather worse than better. I have it seldom, thank God, and, I believe lightly, in comparison of others.

It was the fiddle, after all, was out of order — not the fiddlestick; the body, not the mind. I walked out; met Mrs. Skene, who took a turn with me in Princes Street. Bade Constable and Cadell farewell, and had a brisk walk home, which enables me to face the desolation here with more spirit. News from Sophia. She has had the luck to get an anti-druggist in a Dr. Gooch, who prescribes care for Johnnie instead of drugs, and a little home-brewed ale instead of wine; and, like a liberal physician, supplies the medicine he prescribes. As for myself, since I had scarce stirred to take exercise for four or five days, no wonder I had the mulligrubs. It is an awful sensation, though, and would have made an enthusiast of me, had I indulged my imagination on devotional subjects. I have been always careful to place my mind in the most tranquil posture which it can assume during my private exercises of devotion.

I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly during the last few days by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of O'Donnel, which has some striking and beautiful passages of situation and description, and in the comic part is very rich and entertaining. I do not remember being so much pleased with it at first. There is a want of story, always fatal to a book the first reading — and it is well if it gets a chance of a second. Alas, poor novel! Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters

of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!

March 15. — This morning I leave No. 39 Castle Street, for the last time. "The cabin was convenient," and habit had made it agreeable to me. I never reckoned upon a change in this particular so long as I held an office in the Court of Session. In all my former changes of residence it was from good to better; this is retrograding. I leave this house for sale, and I cease to be an Edinburgh citizen, in the sense of being a proprietor, which my father and I have been for sixty years at least. So farewell, poor 39, and may you never harbor worse people than those who now leave you. Not to desert the Lares all at once, Lady S. and Anne remain till Sunday. As for me, I go, as aforesaid, this morning.

"Ha til mi tulidh'!"[1] —

[1] I return no more. [See *Mackrimmon's Lament*, Scott's *Poetical Works*, vol. xi. p. 332. Cambridge Ed. p. 439.]

CHAPTER LXIX

DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS. — CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR ROBERT DUNDAS AND MR. CROKER ON THE SUBJECT OF MALACHI MALAGROWTHER

1826

Sir Walter's Diary begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking apace at Brighton. The misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health; and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end.

Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labor. With rare exceptions he appears, all through this trying period, to have finished his daily task — thirty printed pages of Woodstock — until that novel was completed; or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production; such as his paper on Galt's Omen for Blackwood's Magazine — or his very valuable one on the Life of Kemble for the Quarterly Review. And hardly had Woodstock been finished before he began the Chronicles of the Canongate. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends; and I need scarcely add, that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week. The picture of resolution and industry which this portion of his Journal presents is

certainly as remarkable as the boldest imagination could have conceived.

Before I open the Diary again, however, I may as well place in what an ingenious contemporary novelist calls an "Inter-Chapter," three letters connected with the affair of Malachi Malagrowther. The first was addressed to the late Sir Robert Dundas (his colleague at the Clerks' Table), on receiving through him the assurance that Lord Melville, however strong in his dissent from Malachi's views on the Currency Question, had not allowed that matter to interrupt his affectionate regard for the author. The others will speak for themselves.

TO SIR ROBERT DUNDAS OF DUNIRA, BART., HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH.

My dear Sir Robert, — I had your letter to-day, and am much interested and affected by its contents. Whatever Lord Melville's sentiments had been towards me, I could never have lost remembrance of the very early friend with whom I carried my satchel to school, and whose regard I had always considered as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. I remain of the same opinion respecting the Letters, which have occasioned so much more notice than they would have deserved, had there not been a very general feeling in this country, and among Lord Melville's best friends too, authorizing some public remonstrances of the kind from some one like myself, who had nothing to win or to lose — or rather, who hazarded losing a great deal in the good opinion of friends whom he was accustomed not to value only, but to reverence. As to my friend Croker, an adventurer like myself, I would throw my hat into the ring for love, and give him a bellyful. But I do not feel there is any call on me to do so, as I could not do it without entering into particulars, which I have avoided. If I had said, which I might have done, that, in a recent case, a gentleman, holding an office under the Great Seal of Scotland,

was referred to the English Crown Counsel — who gave their opinion — on which opinion the Secretary was prepared to act — that he was forcibly to be pushed from his situation, because he was, from age and malady, not adequate to its duties, — and that by a process of English law, the very name of which was unknown to us, — I would, I think, have made a strong case. But I care not to enter into statements to the public, the indirect consequence of which might be painful to some of our friends. I only venture to hope on that subject, that, suffering Malachi to go as a misrepresenter, or calumniator, or what they will, some attention may be paid that such grounds for calumny and misrepresentation shall not exist in future — I am contented to be the scapegoat. I remember the late Lord Melville defending, in a manner that defied refutation, the Scots laws against sedition, and I have lived to see these repealed, by what our friend Baron Hume calls "a bill for the better encouragement of sedition and treason." It will last my day probably; at least I shall be too old to be shot, and have only the honorable chance of being hanged for *incivisme*. The whole burgher class of Scotland are gradually preparing for radical reform — I mean the middling and respectable classes; and when a burgh reform comes, which perhaps cannot long be delayed, Ministers will not return a member for Scotland from the towns. The gentry will abide longer by sound principles; for they are needy, and desire advancement for their sons, and appointments, and so on. But this is a very hollow dependence, and those who sincerely hold ancient opinions are waxing old.

Differing so much as we do on this head, and holding my own opinion as I would do a point of religious faith, I am sure I ought to feel the more indebted to Lord Melville's kindness and generosity for suffering our difference to be no breach in our ancient friendship. I shall always feel his sentiments in this respect as the deepest

obligation I owe him; for, perhaps, there are some passages in Malachi's epistles that I ought to have moderated. But I desired to make a strong impression, and speak out, not on the Currency Question alone, but on the treatment of Scotland generally, the opinion which, I venture to say, has been long entertained by Lord Melville's best friends, though who that had anything to hope or fear would have hesitated to state it? So much for my Scottish feelings — prejudices, if you will; but which were born, and will die with me. For those I entertain towards Lord Melville personally, I can only say that I have lost much in my life; but the esteem of an old friend is that I should regret the most; and I repeat I feel most sensibly the generosity and kindness so much belonging to his nature, which can forgive that which has probably been most offensive to him. People may say I have been rash and inconsiderate; they cannot say I have been either selfish or malevolent — I have shunned all the sort of popularity attending the discussion; nay, have refused to distribute the obnoxious letters in a popular form, though urged from various quarters.

Adieu! God bless you, my dear Sir Robert! You may send the whole or any part of this letter if you think proper; I should not wish him to think that I was sulky about the continuance of his friendship. — I am yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

(*Private and confidential.*)

ADMIRALTY, March 16, 1826.

MY DEAR SCOTT, — I have seen Lord Melville's and your letters to Sir R. Dundas, and the tone of both of them makes me feel very anxious to say a confidential word or two to you on the subject. I am not going to meddle with the politics, which are bad enough in printed letters, but to endeavor, in the cordiality of a sincere private friendship, to satisfy you that these differences on speculative points of public policy do not,

in this region, and ought not in yours, to cause any diminution of private intercourse and regard. Lord Melville certainly felt that *his* administration of Scottish affairs was sweepingly attacked, and the rest of the Government were astonished to see the one-pound note question made a kind of war-cry which might excite serious practical consequences; and, no doubt, these feelings were expressed pretty strongly, but it was in the spirit of *et tu, Brute!* The regard, the admiration, the love, which we all bear towards you, made the stroke so much more painful to those who thought it directed at them; but that feeling was local and temporary: by local, I mean that the pain was felt on the spot where the blow was given — and I hope and believe it was so temporary as to be already forgotten. I can venture to assure you that it did not at all interfere with the deep sympathy with which we all heard of the losses you had sustained, nor would it, I firmly believe, have caused a moment's hesitation in doing anything which might be useful or agreeable to you, if such an opportunity had occurred. However Lord Melville may have expressed his soreness on what, it must be admitted, was an attack on *him*, as being for the last twenty years the Minister for Scotland, there is not a man in the world who would be more glad to have an opportunity of giving you any mark of his regard; and from the moment we heard of the inconvenience you suffered, even down to this hour, I do not believe he has had another feeling towards you privately, than that which you might have expected from his general good-nature and his particular friendship for you.

As to *myself* (if I may venture to name myself to you), I am so ignorant of Scottish affairs, and so remote from Scottish interest, that you will easily believe that I felt no *personal* discomposure from Mr. Malagrowther. What little I know of Scotland *you* have taught me, and my chief feeling on this subject was *wonder* that so clever a fellow as M. M. could entertain opinions so different from those which I fancied that I had learnt from you. But this has nothing to do with our *private feelings*. If I differed from M. M. as widely as I do from Mr. M'Culloch, that need not affect my *private feelings* towards Sir Walter Scott, nor his towards me. He may feel the matter very warmly as a Scotchman; I can only have a very general, and therefore proportionably faint interest in the subject;

but in either case you and I are not, like Sir Archy and Sir Callaghan, to quarrel about Sir Archy's great-grandmother. — But I find that I am dwelling too long on so insignificant a part of the subject as myself. I took up my pen with the intention of satisfying you as to the feelings of more important persons, and I shall now quit the topic altogether, with a single remark, that this letter is strictly confidential, that even Lord Melville knows nothing of it, and *à plus forte raison*, nobody else. — Believe me to be, my dear Scott, most sincerely and affectionately yours,

J. W. Croker.

TO J. W. CROKER, ESQ., M. P., ETC., ETC., ADMIRALTY.

Abbotsford, 19th March, 1826.

My dear Croker, — I received your very kind letter with the feelings it was calculated to excite — those of great affection mixed with pain, which, indeed, I had already felt and anticipated before taking the step which I knew you must all feel as awkward, coming from one who has been honored with so much personal regard. I need not, I am sure, say, that I acted from nothing but an honest desire of serving this country. Depend upon it, that if a succession of violent and experimental changes are made from session to session, with bills to amend bills, where no want of legislation had been at all felt, Scotland will, within ten or twenty years, perhaps much sooner, read a more fearful commentary on poor Malachi's Epistles than any statesman residing out of the country, and stranger to the habits and feelings which are entertained here, can possibly anticipate. My head may be low — I hope it will — before the time comes. But Scotland, completely liberalized, as she is in a fair way of being, will be the most dangerous neighbor to England that she has had since 1639. There is yet time to make a stand, for there is yet a great deal of good and genuine feeling left in the country. But if you *unscotch* us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen. The restless and yet laborious and constantly

watchful character of the people, their desire for speculation in politics or anything else, only restrained by some proud feelings about their own country, now become antiquated, and which late measures will tend much to destroy, will make them, under a wrong direction, the most formidable revolutionists who ever took the field of innovation. The late Lord Melville knew them well, and managed them accordingly. Our friend, the present Lord Melville, with the same sagacity, has not the same advantages. His high office has kept him much in the south; — and when he comes down here, it is to mingle with persons who have almost all something to hope or ask for at his hands.

But I shall say no more on this subject so far as politics are concerned, only you will remember the story of the shield, which was on one side gold, and on the other silver, and which two knights fought about till they were mutually mortally wounded, each avowing the metal to be that which he himself witnessed. You see the shield on the golden, I, God knows, not on the silver side — but in a black, gloomy, and most ominous aspect.

With respect to your own share in the controversy, it promised me so great an honor that I labored under a strong temptation to throw my hat into the ring, tie my colors to the ropes, cry, *Hollo there, Saint Andrew for Scotland!* and try what a good cause might do for a bad, at least an inferior, combatant. But then I must have brought forward my facts; and, as these must have compromised friends individually concerned, I felt myself obliged, with regret for forfeiting some honor, rather to abstain from the contest. Besides, my dear Croker, I must say that you sported too many and too direct personal allusions to myself, not to authorize and even demand some retaliation *dans le même genre;* and however good-humoredly men begin this sort of "sharp encounter of their wits," their temper gets the better of them at last. When I was a cudgel-player, a sport at which I

was once an ugly customer, we used to bar rapping over the knuckles, because it always ended in breaking heads; the matter may be remedied by baskets in a set-to with oak saplings, but I know no such defence in the rapier-and-poniard game of wit. So I thought it best not to endanger the loss of an old friend for a bad jest, and sit quietly down with your odd hits, and the discredit which I must count on here for not repaying them, or trying to do so.

As for my affairs, which you allude to so kindly, I can safely say that no oak ever quitted its withered leaves more easily than I have done what might be considered as great wealth. I wish to God it were as easy for me to endure impending misfortunes of a very different kind. You may have heard that Lockhart's only child is very ill, and the delicate habits of the unfortunate boy have ended in a disease of the spine, which is a hopeless calamity, and in my daughter's present situation may have consequences on her health terrible for me to anticipate. To add to this, though it needs no addition — for the poor child's voice is day and night in my ear — I have, from a consultation of physicians, a most melancholy account of my wife's health, the faithful companion of rough and smooth, weal and woe, for so many years. So if you compare me to Brutus in the harsher points of his character, you must also allow me some of his stoical fortitude — "no man bears sorrow better."[1]

I cannot give you a more absolute assurance of the uninterrupted regard with which I must always think of you, and the confidence I repose in your expressions of cordiality, than by entering on details, which one reluctantly mentions, except to those who are sure to participate in them.

As for Malachi, I am like poor Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilies, who was ducked to death at Carlisle for being a Jacobite, and till she was smothered

[1] *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV. Scene 3.

outright, cried out every time she got her head above water, *Charlie yet.* But I have said my say, and have no wish to give my friends a grain more offence than is consistent with the discharge of my own feelings, which, I think, would have choked me if I had not got my breath out. I had better, perhaps, have saved it to cool my porridge; I have only the prospect of being a sort of Highland Cassandra. But even Cassandra tired of her predictions, I suppose, when she had cried herself hoarse, and disturbed all her friends by howling in their ears what they were not willing to listen to.

And so God bless you — and believe, though circumstances have greatly diminished the chance of our meeting, I have the same warm sense of your kindness as its uniform tendency has well deserved. — Yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER LXX

DIARY RESUMED. — ABBOTSFORD IN SOLITUDE. — DEATH OF SIR A. DON. — REVIEW OF THE LIFE OF KEMBLE, ETC. — CONCLUSION OF WOODSTOCK. — DEATH OF LADY SCOTT. — CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE BEGUN. — LETTER TO MISS EDGEWORTH

1826

DIARY

Abbotsford, March 15, — 9 *at night.* — The naturally unpleasant feelings which influenced me in my ejectment, for such it is virtually, readily evaporated in the course of the journey, though I had no pleasanter companions than Mrs. Mackay the housekeeper and one of the maids; and I have a shyness of disposition, which looks like pride, but is not, which makes me awkward in speaking to my household domestics. With an out-of-doors laborer or an old woman gathering sticks I can crack forever. I was welcomed here on my arrival by the tumult great of men and dogs, all happy to see me. One of my old laborers killed by the fall of a stone working at Gattonside Bridge. Old Will Straiton, my man of wisdom and proverbs, also dead. He was entertaining from his importance and self-conceit, but really a sensible old man. When he heard of my misfortunes, he went to bed, and said he would not rise again, and kept his word. He was very infirm when I last saw him. Tom Purdie in great glory, being released from all farm duty, and destined to attend the woods and be my special assistant.

ABBOTSFORD, ENTRANCE HALL

March 17. — Sent off a packet to J. B.; only three pages copy — so must work hard for a day or two. I wish I could wind up my bottom handsomely (an odd but accredited phrase); the conclusion will not be luminous — we must try to make it dashing. Have a good deal to do between hands in sorting up — hourly arrival of books. I need not have exulted so soon in having attained ease and quiet. I am robbed of both with a vengeance. A letter from Lockhart. My worst augury is verified; the medical people think poor Johnnie is losing strength; he is gone with his mother to Brighton. The bitterness of this probably impending calamity is extreme. The child was almost too good for this world; beautiful in features; and though spoiled by every one, having one of the sweetest tempers as well as the quickest intellect I ever saw; a sense of humor quite extraordinary in a child, and, owing to the general notice which was taken of him, a great deal more information than suited his hours. He was born in the eighth month, and such children are never strong — seldom long-lived. I look on this side and that, and see nothing but protracted misery — a crippled frame, and decayed constitution, occupying the attention of his parents for years, and dying at the end of that period, when their hearts were turned on him; or the poor child may die before Sophia's confinement, and that may again be a dangerous and bad affair; or she may, by increase of attention to him, injure her own health. In short, to trace into how many branches such a misery may flow is impossible. The poor dear love had so often a slow fever, that when it pressed its little lips to mine, I always foreboded to my own heart, what all I fear are now aware of.

March 18. — Slept indifferently, and under the influence of Queen Mab, seldom auspicious to me. Dreamed of reading the tale of the Prince of the Black Marble Islands to little Johnnie, extended on a paralytic chair,

and yet telling all his pretty stories about ha-papa, as he calls me, and Chiefswood — and waked to think I should see the little darling no more, or see him as a thing that had better never have existed. Oh, misery, misery, that the best I can wish for him is early death, with all the wretchedness to his parents that is likely to ensue! I had intended to have stayed at home to-day; but Tom more wisely had resolved that I should walk, and hung about the window with his axe and my own in his hand till I turned out with him, and helped to cut some fine paling.

March 19. — Lady S., the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr. Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favorable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected; yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday they propose to return hither — a new affliction, where there was enough before; yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

March 20. — Despatched proofs and copy this morning; and Swanston the carpenter coming in, I made a sort of busy idle day of it with altering and hanging pictures and prints, to find room for those which came from Edinburgh, and by dint of being on foot from ten to near five, put all things into apple-pie order. What strange beings we are! The serious duties I have on hand cannot divert my mind from the most melancholy thoughts; and yet the talking of these workmen, and the trifling occupation which they give me, serves to dissipate my attention. The truth is, I fancy that a body under the

impulse of violent motion cannot be stopped or forced back, but may indirectly be urged into a different channel. In the evening I read and sent off my sheriff-court processes.

March 21. — Perused an attack upon myself, done with as much ability as truth, by no less a man than Joseph Hume, the night-work man of the House of Commons, who lives upon petty abuses, and is a very useful man by so doing. He has had the kindness to say that I am interested in keeping up the taxes; I wish I had anything else to do with them than to pay them. But he is an ass, and not worth a man's thinking about. Joseph Hume, indeed! — I say Joseph Hum, — and could add a Swiftian rhyme, but forbear. Busy in unpacking and repacking. I wrote five pages of Woodstock, which work begins

"To appropinque an end." [1]

March 23. — Lady Scott arrived yesterday to dinner. She was better than I expected, but Anne, poor soul, looked very poorly, and had been much worried with the fatigue and discomfort of the last week. Lady S. takes the *digitalis*, and, as she thinks, with advantage, though the medicine makes her very sick. Yet on the whole, things are better than my gloomy apprehensions had anticipated. Took a brushing walk, but not till I had done a good task.

March 24. — Sent off copy, proofs, etc., to J. B.; clamorous for a motto. It is foolish to encourage people to expect such decoraments. It is like being in the habit of showing feats of strength, which you gain little praise by accomplishing, while some shame occurs in failure.

March 26. — Here is a disagreeable morning; snowing

[1] *Hudibras.*

and hailing, with gleams of bright sunshine between, and all the ground white, and all the air frozen. I don't like this jumbling of weather. It is ungenial, and gives chilblains. Besides, with its whiteness, and its coldness, and its discomfort, it resembles that most disagreeable of all things, a vain, cold, empty, beautiful woman, who has neither mind nor heart, but only features like a doll. I do not know what is so like this disagreeable day, when the sun is so bright, and yet so uninfluential, that

> "One may gaze upon its beams,
> Till he is starved with cold."

No matter, it will serve as well as another day to finish Woodstock. Walked right to the lake, and coquetted with this disagreeable weather, whereby I catch chilblains in my fingers, and cold in my head. Fed the swans. Finished Woodstock, however, *cum tota sequela* of title-page, introduction, etc., and so, as Dame Fortune says in Quevedo, —

> "Fly wheel, and the devil drive thee."[1]

March 27. — Another bright cold day. I answered two modest requests from widow ladies. One, whom I had already assisted in some law business, on the footing of her having visited my mother, requested me to write to Mr. Peel, saying, on her authority, that her second son, a youth of infinite merit and accomplishment, was fit for any situation in a public office, and that I requested he might be provided accordingly. Another widowed dame, whose claim is having read Marmion and The Lady of the Lake, besides a promise to read all my other works — Gad, it is a rash engagement! — demands that I shall either pay £200 to get her cub into some place or other, or settle him in a seminary of education. Really this is very much after the fashion of the husband-

[1] *Fortune in her Wits, and the Hour of all Men.* — Quevedo's Works, Edinburgh, 1798, vol. iii. p. 107.

man of Miguel Turra's requests of Sancho when Governor. "Have you anything else to ask, honest man?" quoth Sancho. But what are the demands of an honest man to those of an honest woman, and she a widow to boot? I do believe your destitute widow, especially if she hath a charge of children, and one or two fit for patronage, is one of the most impudent animals living. Went to Galashiels, and settled the dispute about Sandie's Wall.

March 28. — We have now been in solitude for some time — myself nearly totally so, excepting at meals. One is tempted to ask himself, knocking at the door of his own heart, Do you love this extreme loneliness? I can answer conscientiously, *I do*. The love of solitude was with me a passion of early youth; when in my teens, I used to fly from company to indulge in visions and airy castles of my own, the disposal of ideal wealth, and the exercise of imaginary power. This feeling prevailed even till I was eighteen, when love and ambition awakening with other passions, threw me more into society, from which I have, however, at times withdrawn myself, and have been always even glad to do so. I have risen from a feast satiated; and unless it be one or two persons of very strong intellect, or whose spirits and good-humor amuse me, I wish neither to see the high, the low, nor the middling class of society. This is a feeling without the least tinge of misanthropy, which I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other. If thrown into society, I always have, and always will endeavor to bring pleasure with me, at least to show willingness to please. But for all this, "I had rather live alone," and I wish my appointment, so convenient otherwise, did not require my going to Edinburgh. But this must be, and in my little lodging I shall be lonely enough. — Reading at intervals a novel

called Granby,[1] one of the class that aspire to describe the actual current of society, whose colors are so evanescent, that it is difficult to fix them on the canvas. It is well written, but over-labored — too much attempt to put the reader exactly up to the thoughts and sentiments of the parties. The women do this better: Edgeworth, Ferrier, Austen, have all given portraits of real society, far superior to anything man, vain man, has produced of the like nature.

March 29. — Worked in the morning. Walked from one till half-past four. A fine flashy disagreeable day — snow-clouds sweeping past among sunshine, driving down the valley, and whitening the country behind them. Mr. Gibson came suddenly in after dinner. Brought very indifferent news from Constable's house. It is not now hoped that they will pay above three or four shillings in the pound. Robinson supposed not to be much better. Mr. G. goes to London immediately, to sell Woodstock. This work may fail, perhaps, though better than some of its predecessors. If so, we must try some new manner. I think I could catch the dogs yet. A beautiful and perfect lunar rainbow to-night.

April 1. — *Ex uno die disce omnes.* — Rose at seven or sooner, studied and wrote till breakfast with Anne, about a quarter before ten. Lady Scott seldom able to rise till twelve or one. Then I write or study again till one. At that hour to-day I drove to Huntly Burn, and walked home by one of the hundred and one pleasing paths which I have made through the woods I have planted — now chatting with Tom Purdie, who carries my plaid, and speaks when he pleases, telling long stories of hits and misses in shooting twenty years back — sometimes chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy — and

[1] [*Granby* was written by T. H. Lister, who in 1837-38 published a *Life of the First Earl of Clarendon.*]

sometimes attending to the humors of two curious little terriers of the Dandie Dinmont breed, together with a noble wolf-hound puppy which Glengarry has given me to replace Maida. This brings me down to the very moment I do tell — the rest is prophetic. I shall feel drowsy when this book is locked, and perhaps sleep until Dalgleish brings the dinner summons. Then I shall have a chat with Lady S. and Anne; some broth or soup, a slice of plain meat — and man's chief business, in Dr. Johnson's estimation, is briefly despatched. Half an hour with my family, and half an hour's coquetting with a cigar, a tumbler of weak whiskey and water, and a novel perhaps, lead on to tea, which sometimes consumes another half hour of chat; then write and read in my own room till ten o'clock at night; a little bread, and then a glass of porter, and to bed; — and this, very rarely varied by a visit from some one, is the tenor of my daily life — and a very pleasant one indeed, were it not for apprehensions about Lady S. and poor Johnnie Hugh. The former will, I think, do well; for the latter — I fear — I fear ——

April 2. — I am in a wayward humor this morning. I received yesterday the last proof sheets of Woodstock, and I ought to correct them. Now, this *ought* sounds as like as possible to *must*, and *must* I cannot abide. I would go to Prester John's country of free good-will, sooner than I would *must* it to Edinburgh. Yet this is all folly, and silly folly too; and so *must* shall be for once obeyed *after* I have thus written myself out of my aversion to its peremptory sound. — Corrected the said proofs till twelve o'clock — when I think I will treat resolution, not to a dram, as the fellow said after he had passed the gin-shop, but to a walk, the rather that my eyesight is somewhat uncertain and wavering.

April 3. — I have the extraordinary and gratifying

news that Woodstock is sold for £8228; all ready money — a matchless sale for less than three months' work.[1] If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success, amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy: I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not. I have a little toothache keeps me from working much to-day, besides I sent off, per Blucher, copy for Napoleon, as well as the d——d proofs. — A blank forenoon! But how could I help it, Madam Duty? I was not lazy; on my soul I was not. I did not cry for half holiday for the sale of Woodstock. But in came Colonel Ferguson with Mrs. Stewart of Blackhill, or hall, or something, and I must show her the garden, pictures, etc. This lasts till one; and just as they are at their lunch, and about to go off, guard is relieved by the Laird and Lady Harden, and Miss Eliza Scott — and my dear Chief, whom I love very much, though a little obsidional or so, remains till three. That same crown, composed of the grass which grew on the walls of besieged places, should be offered to visitors who stay above an hour in any eident[2] person's house. Wrote letters this evening.

April 4. — Wrote two pages in the morning. Then went to Ashestiel with Colonel Ferguson. Found my cousin Russell settled kindly to his gardening, etc. He seems to have brought home with him the enviable talent of being interested and happy in his own place. Ashestiel looks worst, I think, at this time of the year, but is a beautiful place in summer, where I passed some happy years. Did I ever pass unhappy years anywhere? None

[1] The reader will understand that, the Novel being sold for the behoof of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors, this sum includes the cost of printing the first edition, as well as paper.

[2] *Eident*, *i. e.*, eagerly diligent.

that I remember, save those at the High School, which I thoroughly detested on account of the confinement. I disliked serving in my father's office, too, from the same hatred to restraint. In other respects, I have had unhappy days, unhappy weeks — even, on one or two occasions, unhappy months; but Fortune's finger has never been able to play a dirge on me for a quarter of a year together. I am sorry to see the Peel-wood and other natural coppice decaying and abridged about Ashestiel, —

> "The horrid plough has razed the green,
> Where once my children play'd;
> The axe has fell'd the hawthorn screen,
> The schoolboy's summer shade." [1]

There was a very romantic pasturage, called the Cow-park, which I was particularly attached to, from its wild and sequestered character. Having been part of an old wood which had been cut down, it was full of copse — hazel, and oak, and all sorts of young trees, irregularly scattered over fine pasturage, and affording a hundred intricacies so delicious to the eye and the imagination. But some misjudging friend had cut down and cleared away without mercy, and divided the varied and sylvan scene (which *was* divided by a little rivulet) into the two most formal things in the world — a *thriving* plantation, many-angled, as usual — and a park *laid down in grass;* wanting, therefore, the rich graminivorous variety which Nature gives her carpet, and showing instead a braird of six days' growth — lean and hungry growth too — of rye-grass and clover. As for the rill, it stagnates in a deep square ditch, which silences its prattle, and restrains its meanders with a witness. The original scene was, of course, imprinted still deeper on Russell's mind than mine, and I was glad to see he was intensely sorry for the change.

April 5. — Rose late in the morning to give the cold

[1] These lines are slightly altered from Logan.

and toothache time to make themselves scarce, which they have obligingly done. Yesterday every tooth on the right side of my head was absolutely waltzing. I would have drawn by the half-dozen, but country dentists are not to be lippened to.[1] To-day all is quietness, but a little stiffness and swelling in the jaw. Worked a fair task; dined, and read Clapperton's journey and Denham's into Bornou. Very entertaining, and less botheration about mineralogy, botany, and so forth, than usual. Pity Africa picks off so many brave men, however. Work again in the evening.

April 6. — Wrote in the morning. Went at one to Huntly Burn, where I had the great pleasure to hear, through a letter from Sir Adam, that Sophia was in health, and Johnnie gaining strength. It is a fine exchange from deep and aching uncertainty on so interesting a subject, to the little spitfire feeling of "Well, but they might have taken the trouble to write." But so wretched a correspondent as myself has not much to say, so I will but grumble sufficiently to maintain the patriarchal dignity. I returned in time to work, and to have a shoal of things from J. B. Among others, a letter from an Irish lady, who, for the *beaux yeux* which I shall never look upon, desires I may forthwith send her all the Waverley Novels, which she assures me will be an *era* in her life. She may find out some other epocha.

April 7. — Made out my morning's task — at one drove to Chiefswood, and walked home by the Rhymer's Glen, Mar's Lee, and Haxelcleugh. Took me three hours. The heath gets somewhat heavier for me every year — but never mind, I like it altogether as well as the day I could tread it best. The plantations are getting all into green leaf, especially the larches, if theirs may be called leaves, which are only a sort of hair. As I

[1] *Lippened to* — *i. e.*, relied upon.

returned, there was, in the phraseology of that most precise of prigs in a white collarless coat and chapeau bras, Mister Commissary [Ramsay], "a rather dense inspissation of rain." Deil care.

> "Lord, who would live turmoiled in the Court,
> And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?"[1]

Yet misfortune comes our way too. Poor Laidlaw lost a fine prattling child of five years old yesterday.

It is odd enough — Iden, the Kentish Esquire, has just made the ejaculation which I adopted in the last page, when he kills Cade, and posts away up to Court to get the price set upon his head. — Here is a letter come from Lockhart, full of Court news, and all sorts of news. He erroneously supposes that I think of applying to Ministers about Charles. I would not make such an application for millions; I think if I were to ask patronage it would not be through them, for some time at least, and I might have better access.[2]

April 8. — We expect a *raid* of folks to visit us this morning, whom we must have *dined* before our misfortunes. Save time, wine, and money, these misfortunes — and so far are convenient things. Besides, there is a dignity about them when they come only like the gout in its mildest shape, to authorize diet and retirement, the night-gown and the velvet shoe; when the one comes to chalk-stones, and you go to prison through the other, it is the devil. Or compare the effects of Sieur Gout and absolute poverty upon the stomach — the necessity of a bottle of laudanum in the one case, the want of a morsel of meat in the other. Laidlaw's infant which died on Wednesday is buried to-day. The people coming to visit prevent my going, and I am glad of it. I hate funerals — always did. There is such a mixture of mummery

[1] *2d King Henry VI.* Act IV. Scene 10.

[2] In a letter of the same day he says, "My interest, as you might have known, lies Windsor-way."

with real grief — the actual mourner perhaps heart-broken, and all the rest making solemn faces, and whispering observations on the weather and public news, and here and there a greedy fellow enjoying the cake and wine. To me it is a farce of most tragical mirth, and I am not sorry (like Provost Coulter[1]) but glad that I shall not see my own. This is a most unfilial tendency of mine, for my father absolutely loved a funeral; and as he was a man of a fine presence, and looked the mourner well, he was asked to every interment of distinction. He seemed to preserve the list of a whole bead-roll of cousins, merely for the pleasure of being at their funerals, which he was often asked to superintend, and I suspect had sometimes to pay for. He carried me with him as often as he could to these mortuary ceremonies; but feeling I was not, like him, either useful or ornamental, I escaped as often as I could. I saw the poor child's funeral from a distance. Ah, that *Distance!* What a magician for conjuring up scenes of joy or sorrow, smoothing all asperities, reconciling all incongruities, veiling all absurdities, softening every coarseness, doubling every effect by the influence of the imagination. A Scottish wedding should be seen at a distance — the gay band of dancers just distinguished amid the elderly group of the spectators — the glass held high, and the distant cheers as it is swallowed, should be only a sketch, not a finished Dutch picture, when it becomes brutal and boorish. Scotch psalmody, too, should be heard from a distance. The grunt and the snivel, and the whine and the scream, should all be blended in that deep and distant sound, which, rising and falling like the Eolian harp, may have some title to be called the praise of one's Maker. Even so the distant funeral: the few mourners on horseback, with their plaids wrapped around them — the father heading the procession as they enter the river, and pointing out the ford by which his darling is to be carried on

[1] See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 148.

the last long road — none of the subordinate figures in discord with the general tone of the incident, but seeming just accessions, and no more; — this *is* affecting.

April 12. — I have finished my task this morning at *half-past eleven* — easily and early — and, I think, not amiss. I hope J. B. will make some great points of admiration!!! — otherwise I shall be disappointed. If this work answers — if it *but* answers, it must set us on our legs; I am sure worse trumpery of mine has had a great run. I remember with what great difficulty I was brought to think myself something better than common, and now I will not in mere faintness of heart give up good hopes.

April 13. — On my return from my walk yesterday, I learnt with great concern the death of my old friend, Sir Alexander Don. He cannot have been above six or seven-and-forty. Without being much together, we had, considering our different habits, lived in much friendship, and I sincerely regret his death. His habits were those of a gay man, much connected with the turf; but he possessed strong natural parts, and in particular few men could speak better in public when he chose. He had tact, with power of sarcasm, and that indescribable something which marks the gentleman. His manners in society were extremely pleasing, and as he had a taste for literature and the fine arts, there were few more agreeable companions, besides being a highly spirited, steady, and honorable man. His indolence prevented his turning these good parts towards acquiring the distinction he might have attained. He was among the *détenus* whom Buonaparte's iniquitous commands confined so long in France; and coming into possession of a large estate in right of his mother, the heiress of the Glencairn family, he had the means of being very expensive, and probably then acquired those gay habits which rendered

him averse to serious business. Being our member for Roxburghshire, his death will make a stir amongst us. I prophesy Harden *will be here*, to talk about starting his son Henry. — Accordingly the Laird and Lady called. I exhorted him to write instantly. There can be no objection to Henry Scott for birth, fortune, or political principles; and I do not see where we could get a better representative.

April 15. — Received last night letters from Sir John Scott Douglas, and Sir William Elliot of Stobbs, both canvassing for the county. Young Harry 's the lad for me. Poor Don died of a disease in the heart; the body was opened, which was very right. Odd enough, too, to have a man, probably a friend two days before, slashing at one's heart as it were a bullock's. I had a letter yesterday from John Gibson. The House of Longman and Co. guarantee the sale of Woodstock. Also I made up what was due of my task both for 13th and 14th. So hey for a Swiftianism —

> "I loll in my chair,
> And around me I stare,
> With a critical air,
> Like a calf at a fair;
> And, say I, Mrs. Duty,
> Good-morrow to your beauty,
> I kiss your sweet shoe-tie,
> And hope I can suit ye."

Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty; don't keep talking, then, but go to your work again. Here is a day's task before you — the siege of Toulon. — Call you that a task? d—n me, I 'll write it as fast as Boney carried it on.

April 16. — I am now far ahead with Nap. — Lady Scott seems to make no way. A sad prospect! In the evening a despatch from Lord Melville, written with all the familiarity of former times. I am very glad of it.

Jedburgh, April 17. — Came over to Jedburgh this morning, to breakfast with my good old friend Mr. Shortreed, and had my usual warm reception. Lord Gillies held the Circuit Court, and there was no criminal trial for any offence whatever. I have attended these circuits with tolerable regularity since 1792, and though there is seldom much of importance to be done, yet I never remember before the Porteous roll[1] being quite blank. The Judge was presented with a pair of white gloves, in consideration of its being a maiden circuit.

Received £100 from John Lockhart, for review of Pepys; but this is by far too much — £50 is plenty. Still "I must *impeticos the gratillity*"[2] for the present. Wrote a great many letters. Dined with the Judge, where I met the disappointed candidate, Sir John Scott Douglas, who took my excuse like a gentleman.

April 18. — This morning I go down to Kelso to poor Don's funeral. It is, I suppose, forty years since I saw him first. I was staying at Sydenham, a lad of fourteen, or by'r Lady some sixteen; and he, a boy of six or seven, was brought to visit me on a pony, a groom holding the leading rein — and now I, an old gray man, am going to lay him in his grave. Sad work. The very road I go is a road of grave recollections.

Abbotsford, April 19. — Returned last night from the house of death and mourning to my own, now the habitation of sickness and anxious apprehension. The result cannot yet be judged. — Two melancholy things last night. I left my pallet in our family apartment, to make way for a female attendant, and removed to a dressing-room adjoining, when to return, or whether ever,

[1] [In Scotland, the Catalogue of Criminals brought before the Circuit Courts.]

[2] *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Scene 3.

God only can tell. Also my servant cut my hair, which used to be poor Charlotte's personal task. I hope she will not observe it. The funeral yesterday was very mournful; about fifty persons present, and all seemed affected. The domestics in particular were very much so. Sir Alexander was a kind, though an exact master. It was melancholy to see those apartments, where I have so often seen him play the graceful and kind landlord, filled with those who were to carry him to his long home. There was very little talk of the election, at least till the funeral was over.

April 20. — Another death; Thomas Riddell, younger of Camiston, serjeant-major of the Edinburgh Troop in the sunny days of our yeomanry, and a very good fellow. — The day was so tempting that I went out with Tom Purdie to cut some trees, the rather that my task was very well advanced. He led me into the wood, as the blind King of Bohemia was led by his four knights into the thick of the battle at Agincourt or Crecy, and then, like the old king, "I struck good strokes more than one," which is manly exercise.

April 24. — Good news from Brighton. Sophia is confined, and both she and her baby are doing well, and the child's name is announced to be Walter — a favorite name in our family, and I trust of no bad omen. Yet it is no charm for life. Of my father's family, I was the second Walter, if not the third. I am glad the name came my way, for it was borne by my father, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather; also by the grandsire of that last-named venerable person, who was the first laird of Raeburn.

Hurst and Robinson, the Yorkshire tykes, have failed, after all their swaggering. But if Woodstock and Napoleon take with the public, I shall care little about their insolvency; and if they do not, I don't think their sol-

vency would have lasted long. Constable is sorely broken down.

> "Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That 's sorry yet for thee." [1]

His conduct has not been what I deserved at his hand; but I believe that, walking blindfold himself, he misled me without *malice perpense*. It is best to think so at least, until the contrary be demonstrated. To nourish angry passions against a man whom I really liked would be to lay a blister on my own heart.

April 27. — This is one of those abominable April mornings which deserve the name of *Sans Cullotides*, as being cold, beggarly, coarse, savage, and intrusive. The earth lies an inch deep with snow, to the confusion of the worshippers of Flora. It is as imprudent to attach yourself to flowers in Scotland as to a caged bird; the cat, sooner or later, snaps up the one, and these *Sans Cullotides* annihilate the other. It was but yesterday I was admiring the glorious flourish of the pears and apricots, and now hath come the "killing frost." But let it freeze without, we are comfortable within. Lady Scott continues better, and, we may hope, has got the turn of her disease.

April 28. — Beautiful morning, but ice as thick as pasteboard, too surely showing that the night has made good yesterday's threat. Dalgleish, with his most melancholy face, conveys the most doleful tidings from Bogie. But servants are fond of the woeful, it gives such consequence to the person who communicates bad news. Wrote two letters, and read till twelve, and now for a stout walk among the plantations till four. — Found Lady Scott obviously better, I think, than I had left her in the morning. In walking I am like a spavined horse, and heat as I get on. The flourishing plantations around

[1] [*King Lear*, Act III. Scene 2.]

me are a great argument for me to labor hard. "*Barbarus has segetes?*" I will write my finger-ends off first.

April 29. — I was always afraid, privately, that Woodstock would not stand the test. In that case my fate would have been that of the unfortunate minstrel and trumpeter Maclean at the battle of Sheriffmuir, —

> "Through misfortune he happened to fa', man,
> But saving his neck
> His trumpet did break,
> And came off without music at a', man." [1]

J. B. corroborated my doubts by his raven-like croaking and criticising; but the good fellow writes me this morning that he is written down an ass, and that the approbation is unanimous. It is but Edinburgh, to be sure; but Edinburgh has always been a harder critic than London. It is a great mercy, and gives encouragement for future exertion. Having written two leaves this morning, I think I will turn out to my walk, though two hours earlier than usual. Egad, I could not persuade myself that it was such bad *Balaam*,[2] after all.

May 2. — Yesterday was a splendid May-day — to-day seems inclined to be *soft*, as we call it; but *tant mieux*. Yesterday had a twang of frost in it. I must get to work and finish Boaden's Life of Kemble, and Kelly's Reminiscences, for the Quarterly.[3] — I wrote and read for three hours, and then walked, the day being soft and delightful; but, alas, all my walks are lonely from the absence of my poor companion. She does not suffer, thank God — but strength must fail at last. Since Sunday there has been a gradual change — very gradual —

[1] Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, vol. ii. p. 5.

[2] *Balaam* is the cant name in a newspaper office for Asinine paragraphs, about monstrous productions of nature and the like, kept standing in type to be used whenever the real news of the day leave an awkward space that must be filled up somehow.

[3] See *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xx. pp. 152–244.

but, alas, to the worse. My hopes are almost gone. But I am determined to stand this grief as I have done others.

May 4. — On visiting Lady Scott's sick-room this morning I found her suffering, and I doubt if she knew me. Yet after breakfast, she seemed serene and composed. The worst is, she will not speak out about the symptoms under which she labors. Sad, sad work. I am under the most melancholy apprehension, for what constitution can hold out under these continued and wasting attacks? My niece, Anne Scott, a prudent, sensible, and kind young woman, arrived to-day, having come down to assist us in our distress from so far as Cheltenham. This is a great consolation. — Henry Scott carries the county without opposition.

May 6. — The same scene of hopeless (almost) and unavailing anxiety. Still welcoming me with a smile, and asserting she is better. I fear the disease is too deeply entwined with the principles of life. Still laboring at this Review, without heart or spirits to finish it. I am a tolerable Stoic, but preach to myself in vain.

> "Are these things then necessities?
> Then let us meet them like necessities." [1]

May 7. — Hammered on at the Review till my backbone ached. But I believe it was a nervous affection, for a walk cured it. Sir Adam and the Colonel dined here. So I spent the evening as pleasantly as I well could, considering I am so soon to go like a stranger to the town of which I have been so long a citizen, and leave my wife lingering, without prospect of recovery, under the charge of two poor girls. *Talia cogit dura necessitas.*

May 8. — I went over to the election at Jedburgh.

[1] *2d King Henry VI.* Act III. Scene 1.

There was a numerous meeting; the Whigs, who did not bring ten men to the meeting, of course took the whole matter under their patronage, which was much of a piece with the Blue Bottle drawing the carriage. To see the difference of modern times! We had a good dinner, and excellent wine; and I had ordered my carriage at half-past seven, almost ashamed to start so soon. Everybody dispersed at so early an hour, however, that when Henry had left the chair, there was no carriage for me, and Peter proved his accuracy by showing me it was but a quarter past seven. In the days that I remember, they would have kept it up till daylight; nor do I think poor Don would have left the chair before midnight. Well, there is a medium. Without being a veteran Vice — a gray Iniquity, like Falstaff, I think an occasional jolly-bout, if not carried to excess, improved society: men were put into good-humor; when the good wine did its good office, the jest, the song, the speech, had double effect; men were happy for the night, and better friends ever after, because they had been so.

May 11. —

> "Der Abschiedstag ist da,
> Schwer liegt es auf den Herzen — schwer." [1]

Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years when so very ill — that I did not,

[1] This is the opening couplet of a German trooper's song, alluded to, *ante*, vol. ii. p. 9. The literal translation is, —

> The day of departure is come,
> Heavy lies it on the hearts — heavy.

could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attendance have availed — and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne to-day *en famille*. I cannot help it; but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

Edinburgh — Mrs. Brown's Lodgings, North St. David Street — May 12. — I passed a pleasant day with honest J. B., which was a great relief from the black dog, which would have worried me at home. We were quite alone.

Well, here I am in Arden. And I may say with Touchstone, "When I was at home I was in a better place;"[1] I must, when there is occasion, draw to my own Bailie Nicol Jarvie's consolation, "One cannot carry the comforts of the Saut-Market about with one." Were I at ease in mind, I think the body is very well cared for. Only one other lodger in the house, a Mr. Shandy — a clergyman; and, despite his name, said to be a quiet one.

May 13. — The projected measure against the Scottish bank-notes has been abandoned. Malachi might clap his wings upon this, but, alas, domestic anxiety has cut his comb.

I think very lightly in general of praise; it costs men nothing, and is usually only lip-salve. Some praise, however, and from some people, does at once delight and strengthen the mind; and I insert in this place the quotation with which Ld. C. Baron Shepherd concluded a letter concerning me to the Chief-Commissioner:

[1] *As You Like It*, Act I. Scene 4.

"*Magna etiam illa laus, et admirabilis videri solet, tulisse casus sapienter adversos, non fractum esse fortuna, retinuisse in rebus asperis dignitatem.*"[1] I record these words, not as meriting the high praise they imply, but to remind me that such an opinion being partially entertained of me by a man of a character so eminent, it becomes me to make my conduct approach as much as possible to the standard at which he rates it.

As I must pay some cash in London, I have borrowed from Mr. Alexander Ballantyne the sum of £500. If God should call me before next November, when my note falls due, I request my son Walter will, in reverence to my memory, see that Mr. Alexander Ballantyne does not suffer for having obliged me in a sort of exigency — he cannot afford it, and God has given my son the means to repay him.

May 14. — A fair good-morrow to you, Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering. — Hogg was here yesterday in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of £100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself. But I long ago remonstrated against the transaction at all, and gave him £50 out of my pocket to avoid granting the accommodation, but it did no good.

May 15. — Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

Abbotsford, May 16. — She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days — easy at last. I

[1] Cicero, *de Orat.* ii. 346.

arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child — the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mamma — never return again — gone forever — a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger — what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel — sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family — all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte — my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic — but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet, for a long time

at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

May 17. — Last night Anne, after conversing with apparent ease, dropped suddenly down as she rose from the supper-table, and lay six or seven minutes, as if dead. Clarkson, however, has no fear of these affections.

May 18. — Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gayety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere — somehow; *where* we cannot tell — *how* we cannot tell; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation, that necessity which rendered it even a relief, that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself, and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me, — the choking sensation. I have been to her room: there was no voice in it — no stirring; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere; all was neat, as she loved it, but all was calm — calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her: she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after me, and said, with a sort of smile, "You all have such melancholy faces." These were the

last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said; when I returned, immediately [before] departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

They are arranging the chamber of death — that which was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a footfall. Oh, my God!

May 19. — Anne, poor love, is ill with her exertions and agitation — cannot walk — and is still hysterical, though less so. I advised flesh-brush and tepid bath, which I think will bring her about. We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest is one of the rules of ultra-civilization which, in so many instances, strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members; how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling; and so far as it may be adopted without affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

May 20. — To-night, I trust, will bring Charles or Lockhart, or both; at least I must hear from them. A letter from Violet Lockhart gave us the painful intelligence that she had not mentioned to Sophia the dangerous state in which her mother was. Most kindly meant, but certainly not so well judged. I have always thought that truth, even when painful, is a great duty on such

occasions, and it is seldom that concealment is justifiable. Sophia's baby was christened on Sunday 14th May, at Brighton, by the name of Walter Scott. May God give him life and health to wear it with credit to himself and those belonging to him! Melancholy to think that the next morning after this ceremony deprived him of so near a relation!

May 21. — Our sad preparations for to-morrow continue. A letter from Lockhart; doubtful if Sophia's health will let him be here. If things permit he comes to-night. From Charles not a word; but I think I may expect him. I wish to-morrow were over; not that I fear it, for my nerves are pretty good, but it will be a day of many recollections.

May 22. — Charles arrived last night, much affected, of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing Mr. Ramsay,[1] the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley,[2] the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom, I should next hear those solemn words. Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about ——

[1] The Rev. Edward Bannerman Ramsay, A. M., St. John's College, Cambridge, minister of St. John's Chapel, Edinburgh. [Afterwards Dean of the Diocese in the Scots Episcopal Church, and widely known as the much loved "Dean Ramsay," author of *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*. This venerable gentleman was for many years the delight of all who had the privilege of knowing him. He died at the age of eighty-three in his house, 23, Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, December 27, 1872. — D. D.]

[2] Lady Alvanley died at Edinburgh, 17th January, 1825, and was buried in the Chapel of Holyrood. See *ante*, vol. iv. p. 2.

May 23. — About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow, and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over-partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me — the beautiful day, the gray ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking, and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks — the train of carriages — the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so — and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience. Poor Anne has had longer fits since our arrival from Dryburgh than before, but yesterday was the crisis. She desired to hear prayers read by Mr. Ramsay, who performed the duty in the most solemn manner. But her strength could not carry it through. She fainted before the service was concluded.

May 24. — Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons did me a deal of good; indeed their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of everything are so just and honorable, kind towards their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

May 25. — I had sound sleep to-night, and waked with little or nothing of the strange dreamy feeling which

had made me for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best known to him. — This evening Walter left us, being anxious to return to his wife as well as to his regiment.

May 26. — A rough morning makes me think of St. George's Channel, which Walter must cross to-night or to-morrow to get to Athlone. The wind is almost due east, however, and the Channel at the narrowest point between Port-Patrick and Donaghadee. His absence is a great blank in our circle, especially I think to his sister Anne, to whom he shows invariably much kindness. But indeed they do so without exception each towards the other; and in weal or woe, have shown themselves a family of love. I will go to town on Monday and resume my labors. Being now of a grave nature, they cannot go against the general temper of my feelings, and in other respects the exertion, as far as I am concerned, will do me good; besides, I must reëstablish my fortune for the sake of the children, and of my own character. I have not leisure to indulge the disabling and discouraging thoughts that press on me. Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits? and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven! This day and to-morrow I give to the currency of the ideas which have of late occupied my mind, and with Monday they shall be mingled at least with other thoughts and cares. — Last night Charles and I walked late on the terrace at Kaeside, when the clouds seemed accumulating in the wildest masses both on the Eildon Hills and other mountains in the distance. This rough morning reads the riddle. Dull, drooping, cheerless, has this day been. I cared not carrying my own gloom to the girls, and so sate in my own room, dawdling with old papers, which awakened as many stings as if

they had been the nest of fifty scorpions. Then the solitude seemed so absolute — my poor Charlotte would have been in the room half-a-score of times to see if the fire burned, and to ask a hundred kind questions. Well, that is over — and if it cannot be forgotten, must be remembered with patience.

May 27. — A sleepless night. It is true, I should be up and be doing, and a sleepless night sometimes furnishes good ideas. Alas, I have no companion now with whom I can communicate, to relieve the loneliness of these watches of the night. But I must not fail myself and my family — and the necessity of exertion becomes apparent. I must try a *hors d'œuvre* — something that can go on between the necessary intervals of Nap. Mrs. Murray Keith's Tale of the Deserter, with her interview with the lad's mother, may be made most affecting, but will hardly endure much expansion.[1] The framework may be a Highland tour, under the guardianship of the sort of postilion whom Mrs. M. K. described to me — a species of *conducteur* who regulated the motions of his company, made their halts, and was their cicerone.

May 28. — I wrote a few pages yesterday, and then walked. I believe the description of the old Scottish lady may do, but the change has been unceasingly rung upon Scottish subjects of late, and it strikes me that the introductory matter may be considered as an imitation of Washington Irving — yet not so neither. In short, I will go on, to-day make a dozen of close pages ready, and take J. B.'s advice. I intend the work as an *olla podrida*, into which any odds and ends of narrative or description may be thrown.

I wrote easily. I think the exertion has done me good. I slept sound last night, and at waking, as is usual with me, I found I had some clear views and

[1] *The Highland Widow* — Waverley Novels.

thoughts upon the subject of this trifling work. I wonder if others find so strongly as I do the truth of the Latin proverb, *Aurora musis amica.*

Edinburgh, May 30. — Returned to town last night with Charles. This morning resume ordinary habits of rising early, working in the morning, and attending the Court. All will come easily round. But it is at first as if men looked strange on me, and bit their lip when they wring my hand, and indicated suppressed feelings. It is natural this should be — undoubtedly it has been so with me. Yet it is strange to find one's self resemble a cloud, which darkens gayety wherever it interposes its chilling shade. Will it be better when, left to my own feelings, I see the whole world pipe and dance around me? I think it will. Their sympathy intrudes on my private affliction. I finished correcting the proofs for the Quarterly; it is but a flimsy article — but then the circumstances were most untoward. This has been a melancholy day — most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence — a sort of throttling sensation — then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead. I think I feel my loss more than at the first blow. Poor Charles wishes to come back to study here when his term ends at Oxford. I can see the motive.

May 31. — The melancholy horrors of yesterday must not return. To encourage that dreamy state of incapacity is to resign all authority over the mind, and I have been used to say

"My mind to me a kingdom is." [1]

I am rightful monarch; and, God to aid, I will not be

[1] "This excellent philosophical song appears to have been famous in the sixteenth century," etc. — Percy's *Reliques*, vol. i. p. 307.

dethroned by any rebellious passion that may rear its standard against me. Such are morning thoughts, strong as carle-hemp — says Burns, —

> "Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
> Thou stalk of carle-hemp in man."

Charles went by the steamboat this morning at six. We parted last night mournfully on both sides. Poor boy, this is his first serious sorrow. Wrote this morning a Memorial on the Claim, which Constable's people prefer as to the copyrights of Woodstock and Napoleon. My argument amounts to this, that being no longer accountable as publishers, they cannot claim the character of such, or assert any right arising out of the contracts entered into while they held that capacity. — I also finished a few trifling memoranda on a book called The Omen, at Blackwood's request.

Since these Memoirs were originally published, the Editor has been favored with a letter to Miss Edgeworth, which seems too valuable to be omitted. The gentleman, a clergyman of distinguished talents, whose death is alluded to was an intimate friend of the Edgeworthstown family, and made one of the merry party that met Sir Walter under their roof in August, 1825.

TO MISS EDGEWORTH, ETC.

My dear Miss Edgeworth, — I had been long meditating writing you a letter, but probably should have paid it off with thinking about it, like the parrot in the show, had not your kind letter, just received, made it an absolute act of ingratitude to suspend my purpose any longer. Woe 's me if any of my friends judge of my regard by my regularity as a correspondent; for, partly having much necessarily to write, partly from the gradual but very sensible failure of my eyes, and partly from a touch of original sin which often prevents me from doing the very thing I ought to do, I have become a very unworthy letter-writer.

The circumstances which have given you such friendly anx-

iety, I am not stoic enough to treat with disregard, but it is not my nature to look upon what can't be helped with any anxious or bitter remembrances. My good fortune, so far as wealth is concerned, was exactly like the motions of the Kings of Brentford,

> "Ere a pot of good ale you could swallow, (I mean *I*,
> It came with a whoop, and is gone with a hollo." not *you*.)

The fact is, I belong to that set of philosophers who ought to be called Nymmites, after their great founder Corporal Nym, and the fundamental maxim of whose school is, "*things must be as they may*" — and so let that matter rest; things past cure should be past care. I trust I shall do well enough, even if the blackening aspect of affairs in this country should bring on further and more wreckful storms, which is not at present at all unlikely. I had plenty of offers, you may believe, of assistance, and poor Jane proffered her whole fortune as if she had been giving a gooseberry. But what I have done foolishly, I will bear the penance of wisely, and take the whole on my own shoulders. Lady Scott is not a person that cares much about fortune, and as for Beatrice, she amuses herself very well with her altered prospects; for with a sort of high *persiflage* which she never got from me, she has a very generous and independent disposition.

Abbotsford, 30th April.

This letter was written as far as above, more than two months since; but I have since had great family distress, which, and not the circumstances you allude to, has made me avoid writing, unless where circumstances made it absolutely necessary. Sophia, when expecting soon to be confined, was obliged to go down to Brighton with little Johnnie, whose natural weakness has resolved itself into a complaint of the spine, to cure which the poor child has to lie on his back constantly, and there was the great risk that he might be called for before Sophia's confinement. Then came her being rather prematurely delivered of an infant whose health was at his birth very precarious, although, thank God, he seems now doing well. To complete this scene of domestic distress, is Lady Scott's bad health, which, though better than it was, is still as precarious as possible. The complaint is of water in her chest, and the remedy is foxglove, which seems a cure rather worse than most diseases;

yet she sustains both the disease and remedy to the surprise of medical persons. But — I will not write more about it. — As to my pecuniary loss by Constable, it is not worth mentioning, and we have fair prospects that the business may be weathered without much ultimate loss of any kind. The political letters were merely a whim that took about a day each. Of Woodstock, the best I know is that it has been sold for £8400, instead of £3000, which Constable was to have given me. The people are mad, but that in the present circumstances is their affair, and the publishers do not complain.

I am deeply sorry for Mr. Jephson's sudden death, and feel much interested for his family. I have scarce seen a man I liked so much on short acquaintance, he had so much good sense, accomplishment, and thorough gentlemanlike manners. Depend on it, I will do what I can for the subscription. I think the book should have been twelve shillings, the usual price of an octavo, and it should be printed well and on good paper.[1] I beg you will immediately put down the following names : —

	Copies.		*Copies.*
Lady Scott of Abbotsford . .	2		8
Miss Scott of Abbotsford . .	1	Lieut.-Col. Ferguson	1
Charles Scott, Brasenose College, Oxford	1	William Scott, younger, of Raeburn	1
John Lockhart, Esq., Pall Mall, London	1	Captain Walter Scott of Lochore, King's Hussars . . .	1
Mrs. Lockhart	1	Mrs. Scott of Lochore . . .	1
Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden .	1	Sir W. Scott	6
Mrs. Scott of Harden . . .	1		18
	8		

These are names which I will be responsible for, and will remit the money when I get to Edinburgh, as despatch in such cases is always useful. I have no doubt I may pick up a score of names more, if you will send me a subscription list.

In general, I am resolute in subscribing only for myself, because I cannot think of asking my friends to subscribe to the numerous applications which I do not think myself entitled to decline — but this is a very different question.

[1] A volume of Mr. Jephson's sermons was to be published by subscription for the benefit of his widow.

I am concerned to say, I do not think there is the most distant probability of success at Edinburgh in the line Mrs. Jephson proposes, though I am happy to think it may answer better in Bath. We are a poor people, and in families of consideration our estates are almost uniformly strictly entailed on heirs-male; therefore the mother has to keep the female chickens under her own wing, and those of good account are generally desirous of bringing them out themselves, and their connections enable them to do so. Those, again, who are very wealthy, desire sometimes London education for their daughters. In short, there does not exist among us the style of young ladies who can give, for such advantages as I am sure Mrs. Jephson would assure them, anything like £200 or £250 a year. Our eldest sons get our estates, our younger become lawyers, go to India, or enter the army; our girls live at home while mamma can keep house on her jointure — get husbands if they can, and if not, do as they can on the interest of £1500 or £2000. The elder brother is in general an honest fellow, but embarrassed with debt; he keeps his sisters in his house if his wife is not cross; and a sort of half family pride, half family affection, carries the thing through. But for paying large pensions, it is not in the nature of things; besides, though a young Englishman or Irishman gets easily into good society in Edinburgh, it is, I think, more difficult for ladies to do so, unless with some strong recommendation — as fortunes, or talents, or accomplishments, or something. In short, I see no hope in that scheme. The melancholy resource of a boarding-school for young ladies might have succeeded, but the rates have been always kept very low at Edinburgh, so as to make it miserable work. My kind love to your brothers and sisters; I hope Mrs. Fox will make you all a lucky present with good fortune to herself. — Walter and Jane have jointly and severally threatened a descent upon Edgeworthstown from Athlone; but they are both really bashful as to doing what they should do, and so Don Whiskerandos and the Lady Tilburina may never accomplish what they themselves consider as grateful and proper. — Kindest regards to Mrs. Edgeworth and Miss Sneyd. — Always yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

2d May, 1826, ABBOTSFORD.

CHAPTER LXXI

WOODSTOCK. — RECEPTION OF THE NOVEL. — MRS. BROWN'S LODGINGS. — EXTRACT FROM A DIARY OF CAPTAIN BASIL HALL. — BUONAPARTE RESUMED, AND CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE BEGUN. — UNIFORM LABOR DURING SUMMER AND AUTUMN. — EXTRACTS FROM SIR WALTER'S JOURNAL

1826

THE price received for Woodstock shows what eager competition had been called forth among the booksellers, when, after the lapse of several years, Constable's monopoly of Sir Walter's novels was abolished by their common calamity. The interest excited, not only in Scotland and England, but all over civilized Europe, by the news of Scott's misfortunes, must also have had its influence in quickening this commercial rivalry. The reader need hardly be told that the first meeting of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors witnessed the transformation, a month before darkly prophesied, of the "Great Unknown" into the "Too-well-known." Even for those who had long ceased to entertain any doubt as to the main source at least of the Waverley romances, there would have been something stirring in the first confession of the author; but it in fact included the avowal, that he had stood alone in the work of creation; and when the mighty claim came in the same breath with the announcement of personal ruin, the effect on the community of Edinburgh was electrical. It is, in my opinion, not the least striking feature in the foregoing Diary, that it contains no allusion (save the ominous one of 18th

December) to this long withheld revelation. He notes his painful anticipation of returning to the Parliament House — *monstrari digito* — as an insolvent. It does not seem even to have occurred to him, that when he appeared there the morning after his creditors had heard his confession, there could not be many men in the place but must gaze on his familiar features with a mixture of curiosity, admiration, and sympathy, of which a hero in the moment of victory might have been proud — which might have swelled the heart of a martyr as he was bound to the stake. The universal feeling was, I believe, much what the late amiable and accomplished Earl of Dudley expressed to Mr. Morritt when these news reached them at Brighton. "Scott ruined!" said he — "the author of Waverley ruined! Good God! let every man to whom he has given months of delight give him a sixpence, and he will rise to-morrow morning richer than Rothschild!"

It is no wonder that the book, which it was known he had been writing during this crisis of distress, should have been expected with solicitude. Shall we find him, asked thousands, to have been master truly of his genius in the moment of this ordeal? Shall we trace anything of his own experiences in the construction of his imaginary personages and events?

I know not how others interpreted various passages in Woodstock, but there were not a few that carried deep meaning for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortune alone, but the drooping health of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanor a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee: "A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others." In several *mottoes*, and other scraps

ANNE SCOTT

After the painting by William Nicholson

of verse, the curious reader will find similar traces of the facts and feelings recorded in the author's Diary.

As to the novel itself, though none can pretend to class it in the very highest rank of his works, since we feel throughout the effects of the great fundamental error, likened by a contemporary critic to that of the writer who should lay his scene at Rome immediately after the battle of Philippi, and introduce Brutus as the survivor in that conflict, and Cicero as his companion in victory; yet even this censor is forced to allow that Woodstock displays certain excellences, not exemplified in all the author's fictions, and which attest, more remarkably than any others could have done, the complete self-possession of the mind when composing it. Its great merit, Mr. Senior thinks, is that it combines an extraordinary variety of incident with perfect *unity of action!* For the rest, after condemning, in my view far too broadly, the old Shakespearean Cavalier Sir Henry Lee, he says: —

"The Cromwell and Charles II. are inaccurate as portraits, but as imaginary characters they are admirable. Charles is perhaps somewhat too stiff, and Cromwell too sentimental; but these impressions never struck us till our office forced us to pervert the work from its proper end, and to read for the purpose of criticism instead of enjoyment. We are not sure, however, that we do not prefer Tomkins to either of them; his cunning, profligacy, hypocrisy, and enthusiasm are combined into a character as spirited as it is original. Wildrake, Rochecliffe, Desborough, Holdenough, and Bletson are composed of fewer materials, and therefore exhibit less power in the author; but they are natural and forcible, particularly Holdenough. There are few subjects which Sir Walter seems more to delight in painting than the meliorating influence of religious feelings on an imperfect temper, even though somewhat alloyed by superstition and enthusiasm. — Woodstock is a picture full of false costume and incorrect design, but splendidly grouped and colored; and we envy those whose imperfect knowledge of the real events has enabled them to enjoy its beauties without being offended by its inaccuracies."

There is one character of considerable importance which the reviewer does not allude to. If he had happened to have the slightest tincture of his author's fondness for dogs, he would not have failed to say something of the elaborate and affectionate portraiture of old Maida, under the name of Bevis.

The success of this novel was great: large as the price was, its publishers had no reason to repent their bargain; and of course the rapid receipt of such a sum as £8000, the product of hardly three months' labor, highly gratified the body of creditors, whose debtor had devoted to them whatever labor his health should henceforth permit him to perform. We have seen that he very soon began another work of fiction; and it will appear that he from the first designed the Chronicles of the Canongate to be published by Mr. Robert Cadell. That gentleman's connection with Constable was, from circumstances of which the reader may have traced various little indications, not likely to be renewed after the catastrophe of their old copartnership. They were now endeavoring to establish themselves in separate businesses; and each was, of course, eager to secure the countenance of Sir Walter. He did not hesitate a moment. He conceived that Constable had acted in such a manner by him, especially in urging him to borrow large sums of money for his support after all chance of recovery was over, that he had more than forfeited all claims on his confidence; and Mr. Cadell's frank conduct in warning Ballantyne and him against Constable's last mad proposal about a guarantee for £20,000 had produced a strong impression in his favor.

Sir Walter's Diary has given us some pleasing glimpses of the kind of feeling displayed by Ballantyne towards him, and by him towards Ballantyne, during these dark months. In justice to both, I shall here insert one of the notes addressed by Scott, while Woodstock was at press, to his critical typographer. It has reference to

a request, that the success of Malachi Malagrowther might be followed up by a set of essays on Irish Absenteeism in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal; — the editorship of which paper, with the *literary* management of the printing-house, had been continued to Mr. Ballantyne, upon a moderate salary, by his creditors' trustees. I may observe, that when the general superintendence of the printing-house came into the hands of regular men of business, it was found (notwithstanding the loss of Constable's great employment) a lucrative one: the creditors, after paying James his salary, cleared in one year £1200 from the concern, which had for many before been a source of nothing but perplexity to its founders. No hints of mutual complaint or recrimination ever dropt from either of the fallen partners. The printer, like Scott, submitted without a murmur of that sort, or indeed of any sort, to his reverses: he withdrew to a very small house in a sequestered suburban situation, and altered all his domestic habits and arrangements with decision and fortitude. Here he received many communications such as the following: —

TO MR. JAMES BALLANTYNE.

North St. David Street.

Dear James, — I cannot see to read my manuscript in the way you propose — I would give a thousand pounds I could; but, like the officer of the Customs, when the Board desired him to read a cocket of his own, — I am cocket-*writer*, not cocket-*reader* — and you must be thankful that I can perform even that part of the duty.

We must in some sort stand or fall *together;* and I do not wish you to think that I am forgetting your interest in my own — though I sincerely believe the former is what you least think of. But I am afraid I must decline the political task you invite me to. It would cost me a fortnight's hard work to do anything to purpose, for I

have no information on the subject whatever. In short, as the Earl of Essex said on a certain occasion, "Frankly, it may not be." I hope next winter will afford me an opportunity to do something, which, as Falstaff says, "may do you good." — Ever yours, W. S.

The date of this note (North St. David Street) reminds me of a passage in Captain Basil Hall's Diary. He called at Mrs. Brown's lodging-house one morning — and on his return home wrote as follows: —

"A hundred and fifty years hence, when his works have become old classical authorities, it may interest some fervent lover of his writings to know what this great genius was about on Saturday the 10th of June, 1826 — five months after the total ruin of his pecuniary fortunes, and twenty-six days after the death of his wife.

"In the days of his good luck he used to live at No. 39 in North Castle Street, in a house befitting a rich baronet; but on reaching the door, I found the plate on it covered with rust (so soon is glory obscured), the windows shuttered up, dusty, and comfortless; and from the side of one projected a board, with this inscription, 'To Sell;' the stairs were unwashed, and not a footmark told of the ancient hospitality which reigned within. In all nations with which I am acquainted, the fashionable world move westward, in imitation, perhaps, of the great tide of civilization; and, *vice versa*, those persons who decline in fortune, which is mostly equivalent to declining in fashion, shape their course eastward. Accordingly, by an involuntary impulse, I turned my head that way, and inquiring at the clubs in Princes Street, learned that he now resided in St. David Street, No. 6.

"I was rather glad to recognize my old friend the Abbotsford butler, who answered the door; — the saying about heroes and valets-de-chambre comes to one's recollection on such occasions, and nothing, we may be sure, is more likely to be satisfactory to a man whose fortune is reduced than the stanch adherence of a mere servant, whose wages must be altered for the worse. At the top of the stair we saw a small tray, with a sin-

gle plate and glasses for one solitary person's dinner. Some few months ago Sir Walter was surrounded by his family, and wherever he moved, his headquarters were the focus of fashion. Travellers from all nations crowded round, and, like the recorded honors of Lord Chatham, 'thickened over him.' Lady and Miss Scott were his constant companions; the Lockharts were his neighbors both in town and in Roxburghshire; his eldest son was his frequent guest; and, in short, what with his own family and the clouds of tourists, who, like so many hordes of Cossacks, pressed upon him, there was not, perhaps, out of a palace, any man so attended — I had almost said overpowered, by company. His wife is now dead — his son-in-law and favorite daughter gone to London — and his grandchild, I fear, just staggering, poor little fellow, on the edge of the grave, which, perhaps, is the securest refuge for him — his eldest son is married, and at a distance, and report speaks of no probability of the title descending; in short, all are dispersed, and the tourists, those 'curiosos impertinentes,' drive past Abbotsford gate, and curse their folly in having delayed for a year too late their long-projected jaunt to the north. Meanwhile, not to mince the matter, the great man had, somehow or other, managed to involve himself with printers, publishers, bankers, gas-makers, wool-staplers, and all the fraternity of speculators, accommodation-bill manufacturers, land-jobbers, and so on, till, at a season of distrust in money matters, the hour of reckoning came, like a thief in the night; and as our friend, like the unthrifty virgins, had no oil in his lamp, all his affairs went to wreck and ruin, and landed him, after the gale was over, in the predicament of Robinson Crusoe, with little more than a shirt to his back. But like that able navigator, he is not cast away upon a barren rock. The tide has ebbed, indeed, and left him on the beach, but the hull of his fortunes is above water still, and it will go hard indeed with him if he does not shape a raft that shall bring to shore much of the cargo that an ordinary mind would leave in despair to be swept away by the next change of the moon. The distinction between man and the rest of the living creation, certainly, is in nothing more remarkable, than in the power which he possesses over them, of turning to varied account the means with which the world is stocked. But it has always struck me, that there is a far greater distinction

between man and man than between many men and most other animals; and it is from a familiarity with the practical operation of this marvellous difference, that I venture to predict that our Crusoe will cultivate his own island, and build himself a bark in which, in process of time, he will sail back to his friends and fortune in greater triumph than if he had never been driven amongst the breakers.

"Sir Walter Scott, then, was sitting at a writing-desk covered with papers, and on the top was a pile of bound volumes of the Moniteur, — one, which he was leaning over as my brother and I entered, was open on a chair, and two others were lying on the floor. As he rose to receive us, he closed the volume which he had been extracting from, and came forward to shake hands. He was, of course, in deep mourning, with weepers and the other trappings of woe, but his countenance, though certainly a little woe-begonish, was not cast into any very deep furrows. His tone and manner were as friendly as heretofore, and when he saw that we had no intention of making any attempt at sympathy or moanification, but spoke to him as of old, he gradually contracted the length of his countenance, and allowed the corners of his mouth to curl almost imperceptibly upwards, and a renewed lustre came into his eye, if not exactly indicative of cheerfulness, at all events of well-regulated, patient, Christian resignation. My meaning will be misunderstood if it be imagined from this picture that I suspected any hypocrisy, or an affectation of grief in the first instance. I have no doubt, indeed, that he feels, and most acutely, the bereavements which have come upon him; but we may very fairly suppose, that among the many visitors he must have, there may be some who cannot understand that it is proper, decent, or even possible, to hide those finer emotions deep in the heart. — He immediately began conversing in his usual style — the chief topic being Captain Denham (whom I had recently seen in London), and his book of African Travels, which Sir Walter had evidently read with much attention. . . . After sitting a quarter of an hour, we came away, well pleased to see our friend quite unbroken in spirit — and though bowed down a little by the blast, and here and there a branch the less, as sturdy in the trunk as ever, and very possibly all the better for the discipline — better, I mean, for the public, inasmuch as he has now a vast addi-

tional stimulus for exertion — and one which all the world must admit to be thoroughly noble and generous."

A week before this visit took place, Sir Walter had sufficiently mastered himself to resume his literary tasks; and he thenceforth worked with determined resolution on the Life of Napoleon, interlaying a day or two of the Chronicles of the Canongate, whenever he had got before the press with his historical MS., or felt the want of the only repose he ever cared for — a change of labor. In resuming his own Diary, I shall make extracts rather less largely than before, because many entries merely reflect the life of painful exertion to which he had now submitted himself, without giving us any interesting glimpses either of his feelings or opinions. I hope I have kept enough to satisfy all proper curiosity on these last points.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY

Edinburgh, June 4. — I wrote a good task yesterday, and to-day a great one, scarce stirring from the desk. I am not sure that it is right to work so hard; but a man must take himself, as well as other people, when in the humor. I doubt if men of method, who can lay aside or take up the pen just at the hours appointed, will ever be better than poor creatures. Lady Louisa Stuart used to tell me of Mr. Hoole,[1] the translator of Tasso and Ariosto, and in that capacity a noble transmuter of gold into lead, that he was a clerk in the India-House, with long ruffles and a snuff-colored suit of clothes, who occasionally visited her father, John, Earl of Bute. She sometimes conversed with him, and was amused to find that he did exactly so many couplets day by day, neither more nor less; and habit had made it light to him, however heavy it might seem to the reader. Well, but if I

[1] [See *Familiar Letters*, vol. i. p. 409.]

lay down the pen, as the pain in my breast hints that I should, what am I to do? If I think, why I shall weep — and that 's nonsense; and I have no friend now — none — to relieve my tediousness for half an hour of the gloaming. Let me be grateful — I have good news from Abbotsford.

June 7. — Again a day of hard work, only at half-past eight, I went to the Dean of Faculty's to a consultation about Constable,[1] and met with said Dean and Mr. J. S. More and J. Gibson. I find they have as high hope of success as lawyers ought to express; and I think I know how our profession speak when sincere; but I cannot interest myself deeply in it. When I had come home from such a business, I used to carry the news to poor Charlotte, who dressed her face in sadness or mirth as she saw the news affect me; this hangs lightly about me. I had almost forgot the appointment, if J. G. had not sent me a card. I passed a piper in the street as I went to the Dean's and could not help giving him a shilling to play *Pibroch a Donuil Dhu* for luck's sake: — what a child I am!

June 8. — Bilious and headache this morning. A dog howl'd all night and left me little sleep: — poor cur! I dare say he had his distresses, as I have mine. I was obliged to make Dalgleish shut the windows when he appeared at half-past six, as usual, and did not rise till nine. I have often deserved a headache in my younger days without having one, and Nature is, I suppose, paying off old scores. Ay — but then the want of the affectionate care that used to be ready, with lowered voice and stealthy pace, to smooth the pillow and offer condolence and assistance, — gone — gone — forever — ever —

[1] This alludes to the claim advanced by the creditors of Constable and Co. to the copyright of *Woodstock* and the *Life of Napoleon.* The Dean of the Faculty of Advocates was at this time Mr. Cranstoun, now Lord Corehouse. — (1839.)

ever. Well, there is another world, and we 'll meet free from the mortal sorrows and frailties which beset us here: — amen, so be it. Let me change the topic with hand and head, and the heart must follow. I finished five pages to-day, headache, laziness, and all.

June 9. — Corrected a stubborn proof this morning. These battles have been the death of many a man — I think they will be mine. Well, but it clears to windward; so we will fag on. Slept well last night. By the way, how intolerably selfish this Journal makes me seem — so much attention to one's naturals and non-naturals? Lord Mackenzie[1] called, and we had much chat about parish business. — The late regulations for preparing cases in the Outer-House do not work well. One effect of running causes faster through the Courts below is, that they go by scores to appeal, and Lord Gifford has hitherto decided them with such judgment, and so much rapidity, as to give great satisfaction. The consequence will in time be, that the Scottish Supreme Court will be in effect situated in London. Then down fall, as national objects of respect and veneration, the Scottish Bench, the Scottish Bar, the Scottish Law herself, and — and — "Here is an end of an auld sang."[2] Were I as I have been, I would fight knee-deep in blood ere it came to that. I shall always be proud of Malachi as having headed back the Southron, or helped to do so in one instance at least.

June 11. — Bad dreams. Woke, thinking my old and inseparable friend beside me; and it was only when I was fully awake that I could persuade myself that she was dark, low, and distant, and that my bed was widowed. I believe the phenomena of dreaming are in a

[1] The eldest son of The Man of Feeling.

[2] Speech of Lord Chancellor Seafield on the ratification of the Scotch Union. See *Tales of a Grandfather*, chap. lx.

great measure occasioned by the *double touch* which takes place when one hand is crossed in sleep upon another. Each gives and receives the impression of touch to and from the other, and this complicated sensation our sleeping fancy ascribes to the agency of another being, when it is in fact produced by our own limbs acting on each other. Well, here goes — *incumbite remis*.

June 12. — Finished volume third of Napoleon. I resumed it on the 1st of June, the earliest period that I could bend my mind to it after my great loss. Since that time I have lived, to be sure, the life of a hermit, except attending the Court five days in the week for about three hours on an average. Except at that time, I have been reading or writing on the subject of Boney, and have finished last night, and sent to printer this morning, the last sheet of fifty-two written since 1st June. It is an awful screed; but grief makes me a housekeeper, and to labor is my only resource.

June 14. — To-day I began with a page and a half before breakfast. This is always the best way. You stand like a child going to be bathed, shivering and shaking till the first pitcherful is flung about your ears, and then are as blithe as a water-wagtail. I am just come home from Court; and now, my friend Nap., have at you with a downright blow! Methinks I would fain make peace with my conscience by doing six pages to-night. Bought a little bit of Gruyère cheese, instead of our dame's choke-dog concern. When did I ever purchase anything for my own eating? But I will say no more of that. And now to the bread-mill —

June 16. — Yesterday sate in the Court till nearly four. I had, of course, only time for my task. I fear I shall have little more to-day, for I have accepted to dine at Hector's. I got, yesterday, a present of two en-

gravings from Sir Henry Raeburn's portrait of me, which (poor fellow!) was the last he ever painted, and certainly not the worst.[1] I had the pleasure to give one to young Davidoff for his uncle, the celebrated Black Captain of the campaign of 1812. Curious that he should be interested in getting the resemblance of a person whose mode of attaining some distinction has been very different. But I am sensible that if there be anything good about my poetry or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition, which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition. I have been no sigher in shades — no writer of

> "Songs and sonnets and rustical roundelays,
> Framed on fancies, and whistled on reeds." [2]

Abbotsford, Saturday, June 17. — Left Edinburgh to-day after Parliament House. My two girls met me at Torsonce, which was a pleasant surprise, and we returned in the sociable all together. Found everything right and well at Abbotsford under the new régime. I again took possession of the family bedroom and my widowed couch. This was a sore trial, but it was necessary not to blink such a resolution. Indeed, I do not like to have it thought that there is any way in which I can be beaten.[3]

June 18. — This morning wrote till half-past twelve — good day's work — at Canongate Chronicles. Methinks I can make this answer. Then drove to Huntly Burn,

[1] See *ante*, vol. vii. p. 9. [Raeburn apparently executed two half-lengths of Scott in 1822, giving Lord Montagu his choice. The engraving referred to was made from the replica, which remained in the artist's possession, by Mr. Walker, and published in 1826. — D. D.]

[2] Song of *The Hunting of the Hare.*

[3] This entry reminds me of Hannah More's account of Mrs. Garrick's conduct after her husband's funeral. "She told me," says Mrs. More, "that she prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with a sad pleasure." See *Memoirs of Mrs. More*, vol. i. p. 135.

and called at Chiefswood. Walked home. The country crying for rain; yet, on the whole, the weather delicious, dry and warm, with a fine air of wind. The young woods are rising in a kind of profusion I never saw elsewhere. Let me once clear off these encumbrances, and they shall wave broader and deeper yet.

June 21. — For a party of pleasure, I have attended to business well. Twenty pages of Croftangry, five printed pages each, attest my diligence, and I have had a delightful variation by the company of the two Annes. Regulated my little expenses here.

Edinburgh, June 22. — Returned to my Patmos. Heard good news from Lockhart. Wife well, and John Hugh better. He mentions poor Southey testifying much interest for me, even to tears. It is odd — am I so hard-hearted a man? I could not have wept for him, though in distress I would have gone any length to serve him. I sometimes think I do not deserve people's good opinion, for certainly my feelings are rather guided by reflection than impulse. But everybody has his own mode of expressing interest, and mine is stoical even in bitterest grief. I hope I am not the worse for wanting the tenderness that I see others possess, and which is so amiable. I think it does not cool my wish to be of use when I can. But the truth is, I am better at enduring or acting, than at consoling. From childhood's earliest hour, my heart rebelled against the influence of external circumstances in myself and others — *non est tanti!* Today, I was detained in the Court from half-past ten till near four, yet I finished and sent off a packet to Cadell, which will finish one third of the Chronicles, vol. 1st. Henry Scott came in while I was at dinner, and sat while I ate my beef-steak. A gourmand would think me much at a loss, coming back to my ploughman's meal of boiled beef and Scotch broth, from the rather *recherché* table

at Abbotsford, but I have no philosophy in my carelessness on that score. It is natural, though I am no ascetic, as my father was.

June 23. — I received to-day £10 from Blackwood for the article on The Omen. Time was I would not have taken these small tithes of mint and cummin, but scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings, and I, with many depending on me, must do the best I can with my time; God help me.

Blair-Adam, *June* 24. — Left Edinburgh yesterday after the Court, and came over here with the Lord Chief-Baron and William Clerk, to spend as usual a day or two at the Chief-Commissioner's. His Lordship's family misfortunes and my own make our holiday this year of a more quiet description than usual, and a sensible degree of melancholy hangs on the reunion of our party. It was wise, however, not to omit it; for to slacken your hold on life in any agreeable point of connection is the sooner to reduce yourself to the indifference and passive vegetation of old age.

June 25. — Another melting day: we have lounged away the morning, creeping about the place, sitting a great deal, and walking as little as might be, on account of the heat. Blair-Adam has been successively in possession of three generations of persons attached to and skilled in the art of embellishment, and may be fairly taken as a place where art and taste have done a great deal to improve nature. A long ridge of varied ground sloping to the foot of Benarty, and which originally was of a bare, mossy, boggy character, has been clothed by the son, father, and grandfather; while the undulations and hollows, which seventy or eighty years since must have looked only like wrinkles in the black morasses, being now drained and lined, are skirted with deep

woods, particularly of spruce, which thrives wonderfully, and covered with excellent grass. We drove in the droskie, and walked in the evening.

June 26. — Another day of unmitigated heat; thermometer 82°: must be higher in Edinburgh, where I return to-night, when the decline of the sun makes travelling practicable. It will be well for my works to be there — not quite so well for me: there is a difference between the clean, nice arrangement of Blair-Adam and Mrs. Brown's accommodations, though he who is insured against worse has no right to complain of them. But the studious neatness of poor Charlotte has perhaps made me fastidious. She loved to see things clean, even to Oriental scrupulosity. So oddly do our deep recollections of other kinds correspond with the most petty occurrences of our life.

Lord Chief-Baron told us a story of the ruling passion strong in death. Mr. * * * *, a Master in Chancery, was on his deathbed — a very wealthy man. Some occasion of great urgency occurred in which it was necessary to make an affidavit, and the attorney, missing one or two other Masters whom he inquired after, ventured to ask if Mr. * * * * would be able to receive the deposition. The proposal seemed to give him momentary strength; his clerk was sent for, and the oath taken in due form. The Master was lifted up in bed, and with difficulty subscribed the paper; as he sank down again, he made a signal to his clerk — "Wallace." — "Sir?" — "Your ear — lower — lower. Have you got the *half-crown?*" He was dead before morning.

Edinburgh, June 27. — Returned to Edinburgh late last night, and had a most sweltering night of it. This day also cruel hot. However, I made a task, or nearly so, and read a good deal about the Egyptian expedition. I have also corrected proofs, and prepared for a great start, by filling myself with facts and ideas.

June 29. — I walked out for an hour last night, and made one or two calls — the evening was delightful: —

> "Day her sultry fires had wasted,
> Calm and sweet the moonlight rose;
> Even a captive spirit tasted
> Half oblivion of his woes." [1]

I wonder often how Tom Campbell, with so much real genius, has not maintained a greater figure in the public eye than he has done of late. The Magazine seems to have paralyzed him. The author, not only of the Pleasures of Hope, but of Hohenlinden, Lochiel, etc., should have been at the very top of the tree. Somehow he wants audacity, fears the public, and, what is worse, fears the shadow of his own reputation. He is a great corrector too, which succeeds as ill in composition as in education. Many a clever boy is flogged into a dunce, and many an original composition corrected into mediocrity. Tom ought to have done a great deal more: his youthful promise was great. John Leyden introduced me to him. They afterwards quarrelled. When I repeated Hohenlinden to Leyden, he said: "Dash it, man, tell the fellow that I hate him; — but, dash him, he has written the finest verses that have been published these fifty years." I did mine errand as faithfully as one of Homer's messengers, and had for answer, "Tell Leyden that I detest him, but I know the value of his critical approbation." This feud was therefore in the way of being taken up. "When Leyden comes back from India," said Tom Campbell, "what cannibals he will have eaten, and what tigers he will have torn to pieces!"

Gave a poor poetess £1. Gibson writes me that £2300 is offered for the poor house; it is worth £300 more, but I will not oppose my own opinion and convenience to good and well-meant counsel: so farewell, poor No. 39. What a portion of my life has been spent

[1] Campbell's *Turkish Lady*. The poet was then Editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, but he soon gave it up.

there! It has sheltered me, from the prime of life to its decline; and now I must bid good-by to it. I have bid good-by to my poor wife, so long its courteous and kind mistress — and I need not care about the empty rooms; yet it gives me a turn. Never mind; all in the day's work.

June 30. — Here is another dreadful warm day, fit for nobody but the flies. I was detained in Court till four; dreadfully close, and obliged to drink water for refreshment, which formerly I used to scorn, even in the moors, with a burning August sun, the heat of exercise, and a hundred springs gushing around me. Corrected proofs, etc., on my return.

Abbotsford, July 2. — I worked a little this morning, then had a long and warm walk. Captain and Mrs. Hamilton, from Chiefswood, the present inhabitants of Lockhart's cottage, dined with us, which made the evening pleasant. He is a fine soldierly looking man[1] — his wife a sweet good-humored little woman. Since we were to lose the Lockharts, we could scarce have had more agreeable neighbors.

Edinburgh, July 6. — Returned last night, and suffered, as usual, from the incursions of the black horse. Mr. B[arry] C[ornwall] writes to condole with me. I think our acquaintance scarce warranted this; but it is well meant, and modestly done. I cannot conceive the idea of forcing myself on strangers in distress, and I have half a mind to turn sharp round on some of my consolers.

July 8. — Wrote a good task this morning. I may be

[1] Thomas Hamilton, Esq. [brother of Sir William Hamilton, the Metaphysician], — the author of *Cyril Thornton, Men and Manners of America, Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns*, etc., etc. [Died in 1842.]

mistaken; but I do think the tale of Elspat M'Tavish[1] in my bettermost manner — but J. B. roars for chivalry. He does not quite understand that everything may be overdone in this world, or sufficiently estimate the necessity of novelty. The Highlanders have been off the field now for some time. — Returning from the Court, looked into a fine show of wild beasts, and saw Nero the great lion, whom they had the brutal cruelty to bait with bull-dogs, against whom the noble creature disdained to exert his strength. He was lying like a prince in a large cage, where you might be admitted if you wish. I had a month's mind — but was afraid of the newspapers. I could be afraid of nothing else, for never did a creature seem more gentle and yet majestic. I longed to caress him. Wallace, the other lion, born in Scotland, seemed much less trustworthy. He handled the dogs as his namesake did the southron.

July 10. — Dined with John Swinton *en famille*. He told me an odd circumstance. Coming from Berwickshire in the mail-coach, he met with a passenger who seemed more like a military man than anything else. They talked on all sorts of subjects, at length on politics. Malachi's letters were mentioned, when the stranger observed they were much more seditious than some expressions for which he had three or four years ago been nearly sent to Botany Bay. And perceiving John Swinton's surprise at this avowal, he added, "I am Kinloch of Kinloch." This gentleman had got engaged in the Radical business (the only real gentleman, by the way, who did), and harangued the weavers of Dundee with such emphasis, that he would have been tried and sent to Botany Bay, had he not fled abroad. He was outlawed, and only restored to his estates on a composition with Government. It seems to have escaped Mr. Kinloch, that the man who places a lighted coal in the middle of combustibles and

[1] *The Highland Widow.*

upon the floor acts a little differently from him who places the same quantity of burning fuel in a fire-grate.

July 13. — Dined yesterday with Lord Abercromby at a party he gave to Lord Melville and some old friends, who formed the Contemporary Club. Lord M. and I met with considerable feeling on both sides, and all our feuds were forgotten and forgiven; I conclude so at least, because one or two people, whom I know to be sharp observers of the weather-glass on occasion of such squalls, have been earnest with me to meet him at parties — which I am well assured they would not have been (had I been Horace come to life again) were they not sure the breeze was over. For myself, I am happy that our usual state of friendship should be restored, though I could not have *come down proud stomach* to make advances, which is, among friends, always the duty of the richer and more powerful of the two. To-day I leave Mrs. Brown's lodgings. I have done a monstrous sight of work here, notwithstanding the indolence of this last week, which must and shall be amended.

So good-by, Mrs. Brown,
I am going out of town,
Over dale, over down,
Where bugs bite not,
Where lodgers fight not,
Where below you chairmen drink not,
Where beside you gutters stink not;
But all is fresh, and clear, and gay,
And merry lambkins sport and play;
And they toss with rakes uncommonly short hay,
Which looks as if it had been sown only the other day,
And where oats are at twenty-five shillings a boll, they say,
But all 's one for that, since I must and will away.

July 14, *Abbotsford.* — Anybody would think, from the fal-de-ral conclusion of my journal of yesterday, that I left town in a very gay humor — *cujus contrarium verum est.* But nature has given me a kind of buoyancy — I know not what to call it — that mingled even with

my deepest afflictions and most gloomy hours. I have a secret pride — I fancy it will be so most truly termed — which impels me to mix with my distresses strange snatches of mirth "which have no mirth in them."

July 16. — Sleepy, stupid, indolent — finished arranging the books, and after that was totally useless — unless it can be called study that I slumbered for three or four hours over a variorum edition of the Gill's-Hill tragedy.[1] Admirable escape for low spirits, — for, not to mention the brutality of so extraordinary a murder, it led John Bull into one of his most uncommon fits of gambols, until at last he became so maudlin as to weep for the pitiless assassin, Thurtell, and treasure up the leaves and twigs of the hedge and shrubs in the fatal garden as valuable relics, nay, thronged the minor theatres to see the roan horse and yellow gig in which his victim was transported from one house to the other. I have not stept over the threshold to-day, so very stupid have I been.

July 17. — *Desidiæ tandem valedixi.* — Our time is like our money. When we change a guinea, the shillings escape as things of small account; when we break a day by idleness in the morning, the rest of the hours lose their importance in our eye. I set stoutly about seven this morning to Boney, —

> And long ere dinner-time, I have
> Full eight close pages wrote;
> What, Duty, hast thou now to crave?
> Well done, Sir Walter Scott!

[1] The murder of Weare by Thurtell and Co. at Gill's-Hill, in Hertfordshire. Sir Walter collected printed trials with great assiduity, and took care always to have the contemporary ballads and prints bound up with them. He admired particularly this verse of Mr. Hook's broadside, —

> "They cut his throat from ear to ear,
> His brains they battered in;
> His name was Mr. William Weare,
> He dwelt in Lyon's Inn."

July 21. — To Mertoun. Lord and Lady Minto and several other guests were there, besides their own large family. So my lodging was a little room which I had not occupied since I was a bachelor, but often before in my frequent intercourse with this kind and hospitable family. Feeling myself returned to that celibacy which renders many accommodations indifferent which but lately were indispensable, my imagination drew a melancholy contrast between the young man entering the world on fire for fame, and busied in imagining means of coming by it, and the aged widower, *blasé* on the point of literary reputation, deprived of the social comforts of a married state, and looking back to regret instead of looking forward to hope. This brought bad sleep and unpleasing dreams. But if I cannot hope to be what I have been, I will not, if I can help it, suffer vain repining to make me worse than I may be. We left Mertoun after breakfast, and the two Annes and I visited Lady Raeburn at Lessudden. My aunt is now in her ninetieth year — so clean, so nice, so well arranged in every respect, that it makes old age lovely. She talks both of late and former events with perfect possession of her faculties, and has only failed in her limbs. A great deal of kind feeling has survived, in spite of the frost of years. Home to dinner, and worked all the afternoon among the Moniteurs — to little purpose, for my principal acquisition was a headache.

July 25. — At dinner-time to-day came Dr. Jamieson[1] of the Scottish Dictionary — an excellent good man, and full of auld Scottish cracks, which amuse me well enough, but are *caviare* to the young people.

July 26. — This day went to Selkirk, to hold a court.

[1] The venerable lexicographer often had lodgings near Abbotsford in the angling season, being still very fond of that sport. (Dr. Jamieson died 12th July, 1838, aged seventy-nine.)

The Doctor chose to go with me. Action and Reaction — Scots proverb — "The unrest (*i. e.*, pendulum) of a clock gangs aye as far the ae gait as the t'other."

July 27. — Up and at it this morning, and finished four pages. An unpleasant letter from London, as if I might be troubled by some of the creditors there, if I should go up to get materials for Nap. I have no wish to go — none at all. I would even like to put off my visit, so far as John Lockhart and my daughter are concerned, and see them when the meeting could be more pleasant. But then, having an offer to see the correspondence from St. Helena, I can make no doubt that I ought to go. However, if it is to infer any danger to my personal freedom, English wind shall not blow on me. It is monstrous hard to prevent me doing what is certainly the best for all parties.

July 28. — I am wellnigh choked with the sulphurous heat of the weather — and my hand is as nervous as a paralytic's. Read through and corrected St. Ronan's Well. I am no judge, but I think the language of this piece rather good. Then I must allow the fashionable portraits are not the true thing. I am too much out of the way [to see and remark the ridiculous in society]. The story is horribly contorted and unnatural, and the catastrophe is melancholy, which should always be avoided. No matter; I have corrected it for the press.[1] Walter's account of his various quarters per last despatch. Query, if original: —

"Loughrin is a blackguard place,
To Gort I give my curse;
Athlone itself is bad enough,
But Ballinrobe is worse.
I cannot tell which is the worst,
They 're all so very bad;

[1] This novel was passing through the press in 8vo, 12mo, and 18mo, to complete collective editions in these sizes.

But of all towns I ever saw,
Bad luck to Kinnegad."

August 1. — Yesterday evening I took to arranging old plays, and scrambled through two: one, called Michaelmas Term, full of traits of manners; and another a sort of bouncing tragedy, called the Hector of Germany, or the Palsgrave. The last, worthless in the extreme, is like many of the plays in the beginning of the seventeenth century, written to a good tune. The dramatic poets of that time seem to have possessed as joint-stock a highly poetical and abstract tone of language, so that the worst of them remind you of the very best. The audience must have had a much stronger sense of poetry in those days than in ours, since language was received and applauded at the Fortune or the Red Bull, which could not now be understood by any general audience in Great Britain. This leads far.

August 2. — I finished before dinner five leaves, and I would crow a little about it, but here comes Duty like an old housekeeper to an idle chambermaid. Hear her very words: —

Duty. Oh! you crow, do you? Pray, can you deny that your sitting so quiet at work was owing to its raining heavily all the forenoon, and indeed till dinner-time, so that nothing would have stirred out that could help it, save a duck or a goose? I trow, if it had been a fine day, by noon there would have been aching of the head, throbbing, shaking, and so forth, to make an apology for going out.

Egomet Ipse. And whose head ever throbbed to go out when it rained, Mrs. Duty?

Duty. Answer not to me with a fool-born jest, as your friend Erskine used to say to you when you escaped from his good advice under the fire of some silly pun. You smoke a cigar after dinner, and I never check you — drink tea, too, which is loss of time; and then,

instead of writing me one other page, or correcting those you have written out, you rollock into the woods till you have not a dry thread about you; and here you sit writing down my words in your foolish journal instead of minding my advice.

Ego. Why, Mrs. Duty, I would as gladly be friends with you as Crabbe's tradesman fellow with his conscience;[1] but you should have some consideration with human frailty.

Duty. Reckon not on that. But, however, good-night for the present. I would recommend to you to think no thoughts in which I am not mingled — to read no books in which I have no concern — to write three sheets of botheration all the six days of the week *per diem*, and on the seventh to send them to the printer. Thus advising, I heartily bid you farewell.

Ego. Farewell, madam (*exit* DUTY) and be d——d to ye for an unreasonable bitch! "The devil must be in this greedy gled!" as the Earl of Angus said to his hawk; "will she never be satisfied?"[2]

August 3. — Wrote half a task in the morning. From eleven till half-past eight in Selkirk taking precognitions about a *row*, and came home famished and tired. Now, Mrs. Duty, do you think there is no other Duty of the family but yourself? Or can the Sheriff-depute neglect his Duty, that the Author may mind *his?* The thing cannot be; — the people of Selkirk must have justice as well as the people of England books. So the two Duties may go pull caps about it. My conscience is clear.

August 6. — Wrote to-day a very good day's work. Walked to Chiefswood, and saw old Mrs. Tytler, a friend when life was young. Her husband, Lord Woodhouselee, was a kind, amiable, and accomplished man; and

[1] See Crabbe's tale of *The Struggles of Conscience.*

[2] See *Tales of a Grandfather,* chap. xxix.

when we lived at Lasswade Cottage, soon after my marriage, we saw a great deal of the family, who were very kind to us as newly entered on the world. How many early stories did the old lady's presence recall! She might almost be my mother; yet there we sat, like two people of another generation, talking of things and people the rest knew nothing of. When a certain period of life is over, the difference of years, even when considerable, becomes of much less consequence.

August 10. — Rose early, and wrote hard till two, when I went with Anne to Minto. I must not let her quite forego the custom of good society. We found the Scotts of Harden, etc., and had a very pleasant party. I like Lady M. particularly, but missed my facetious and lively friend, Lady Anna Maria. It is the fashion of some silly women and silly men to abuse her as a blue-stocking. If to have good sense and good-humor, mixed with a strong power of observing, and an equally strong one of expressing — if of this the result must be *blue*, she shall be as blue as they will. Such cant is the refuge of fools who fear those who can turn them into ridicule: it is a common trick to revenge supposed raillery with good substantial calumny. Slept at Minto.

August 11. — I was up as usual, and wrote about two leaves, meaning to finish my task at home; but found my Sheriff-substitute here on my return, which took up the evening. But I shall finish the volume in less than a month after beginning it. The same exertion would bring the book out at Martinmas, but December is a better time.

August 14. — Finished Vol. IV. yesterday evening — *Deo gratias*. This morning I was seized with a fit of the "clevers," and finished my task by twelve o'clock, and hope to add something in the evening. I was guilty,

however, of some waywardness, for I began Vol. V. of Boney instead of carrying on the Canongate as I proposed. The reason, however, was, that I might not forget the information I had acquired about the treaty of Amiens.

August 16. — Walter and Jane arrived last night. God be praised for restoring to me my dear children in good health, which has made me happier than anything that has happened these several months. If we had Lockhart and Sophia, there would be a meeting of the beings dearest to me in life. Walked to [Huntly Burn], where I find a certain lady on a visit — so youthy, so beautiful, so strong in voice — with sense and learning — above all, so fond of good conversation, that, in compassion to my eyes, ears, and understanding, I bolted in the middle of a tremendous shower of rain, and rather chose to be wet to the skin than to be bethumped with words at that rate. In the evening we had music from the girls, and the voice of the harp and viol were heard in my halls once more, which have been so long deprived of mirth. It is with a mixed sensation I hear these sounds. I look on my children and am happy; and yet every now and then a pang shoots across my heart.

August 19. — This morning wrote none excepting extracts, etc., being under the necessity of reading and collating a great deal, which lasted till one o'clock or thereabouts, when Dr. and Mrs. Brewster and their young people came to spend a day of happiness at the Lake. We were met there by Captain and Mrs. Hamilton, and a full party. Since the days of Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia, these days of appointed sport and happiness have seldom answered; but we came off indifferently well. We did not indeed catch much fish; but we lounged about in a delightful day, eat and drank — and the children, who are very fine infantry, were clamorously

enjoying themselves. We sounded the loch in two or three different places — the deepest may be sixty feet. I was accustomed to think it much more, but your deepest pools, like your deepest politicians and philosophers, often turn out more shallow than was expected.

August 23, *Bittock's-Bridge*. — Set off cheerily with Walter, Charles, and Surtees, in the sociable, to make a trip to Drumlanrig. We breakfasted at Mr. Boyd's, Broadmeadows, and were received with Yarrow hospitality. From thence climbed the Yarrow, and skirted Saint Mary's Lake, and ascended the Birkhill path, under the moist and misty influence of the *genius loci*. Never mind — my companions were merry and I cheerful. When old people can be with the young without fatiguing them or themselves, their tempers derive the same benefits which some fantastic physicians of old supposed accrued to their constitutions from the breath of the young and healthy. You have not — cannot again have their gayety or pleasure in seeing sights; but still it reflects itself upon you, and you are cheered and comforted. Our luncheon eaten in the herd's cottage; — but the poor woman saddened me unawares, by asking for poor Charlotte, whom she had often seen there with me. She put me in mind that I had come twice over those hills and bogs with a wheel-carriage, before the road, now an excellent one, was made. I knew it was true; but, on my soul, looking where we must have gone, I could hardly believe I had been such a fool. For riding, pass if you will; but to put one's neck in such a venture with a wheel-carriage was too silly.

Drumlanrig, *August* 24. — What visions does not this magnificent old house bring back to me! The exterior is much improved since I first knew it. It was then in the state of dilapidation to which it had been abandoned by the celebrated old Q., and was indeed scarce wind

and water tight. Then the whole wood had been felled, and the outraged castle stood in the midst of waste and desolation, excepting a few scattered old stumps, not judged worth the cutting. Now, the whole has been, ten or twelve years since, completely replanted, and the scattered seniors look as graceful as fathers surrounded by their children. The face of this immense estate has been scarcely less wonderfully changed. The scrambling tenants, who held a precarious tenure of lease under the Duke of Queensberry, at the risk (as actually took place) of losing their possession at his death, have given room to skilful men, working their farms regularly, and enjoying comfortable houses, at a rent which is enough to forbid idleness, but not to overpower industry.

August 25. — The Duke has grown up into a graceful and apparently strong young man, and received us most kindly. I think he will be well qualified to sustain his difficult and important task. The heart is excellent, so are the talents, — good sense and knowledge of the world, picked up at one of the great English schools (and it is one of their most important results), will prevent him from being deceived; and with perfect good-nature, he has a natural sense of his own situation, which will keep him from associating with unworthy companions. God bless him![1] His father and I loved each other well, and his beautiful mother had as much of the angel as is permitted to walk this earth. I see the balcony from which they welcomed poor Charlotte and me, long ere the ascent was surmounted, streaming out their white handkerchiefs

[1] [A few months later, Scott wrote of the Duke: "It delights me to hear this hopeful young nobleman talk with sense and firmness about his plans for improving his estate, and employing the poor. If God and the world spare him, he will be far known as a true Scots lord." Commenting on this, Mr. Douglas says: "The long life of Walter, fifth Duke of Buccleuch, more than fulfilled the hopes and prognostics of his friend. A 'true Scots lord,' he carried with him to the grave in 1884 the love and respect of his countrymen." — *Journal*, vol. i. p. 326.]

from the battlements. There were *four* merry people that day — now one sad individual is all that remains. *Singula prædantur anni.* I had a long walk to-day through the new plantations, the Duchess's Walk by the Nith, etc. (formed by Prior's "Kitty young and gay"); fell in with the ladies, but their donkeys outwalked me — a flock of sheep afterwards outwalked me, and I began to think, on my conscience, that a snail put in training might soon outwalk me. I must lay the old salve to the old sore, and be thankful for being able to walk at all. Nothing was written to-day, my writing-desk having been forgot at Parkgate, but Tom Crichton fetched it up to-day, so something more or less may be done to-morrow morning — and now to dress.

Bittock's-Bridge, August 26. — We took our departure from the friendly halls of Drumlanrig this morning, after breakfast. I trust this young nobleman will be

> "A hedge about his friends,
> A heckle to his foes." [1]

I would have him not quite so soft-natured as his grandfather, whose kindness sometimes mastered his excellent understanding. His father had a temper which better jumped with my humor. Enough of ill-nature to keep your good-nature from being abused is no bad ingredient in their disposition who have favors to bestow.

In coming from Parkgate here, I intended to accomplish a purpose which I have for some years entertained, of visiting Lochwood, the ancient seat of the Johnstones, of which King James said, when he visited it, that the man who built it must have been a thief in his heart. It rained heavily, however, which prevented my making this excursion, and indeed I rather over-walked myself yesterday, and have occasion for rest.

> "So sit down, Robin, and rest thee."

[1] Ballad on *young* Rob Roy's abduction of Jean Key. — *Cromek's Collection.*

Abbotsford, *August* 27. — To-day we journeyed through the hills and amongst the storms; the weather rather bullying than bad. We viewed the Grey Mare's Tail, and I still feel confident in crawling along the ghastly bank, by which you approach the fall. I will certainly get some road of application to Mr. Hope Johnstone, to pray him to make the place accessible. We got home before half-past four, having travelled forty miles.

Blair-Adam, *August* 28. — Set off with Walter and Jane at seven o'clock, and reached this place in the middle of dinner-time. By some of my not unusual blunders, we had come a day before we were expected. Luckily, in this ceremonious generation, there are still houses where such blunders only cause a little raillery, and Blair-Adam is one of them. My excellent friend is in high health and spirits, to which the presence of Sir Frederick adds not a little.[1] His lady is here — a beautiful woman, whose countenance realizes all the poetic dreams of Byron. There is certainly something of full maturity of beauty which seems framed to be adoring and adored; and it is to be found in the full dark eye, luxuriant tresses, and rich complexion of Greece, and not among "the pale unripened beauties of the north." What sort of a mind this exquisite casket may contain is not so easily known. She is anxious to please, and willing to be pleased, and, with her striking beauty, cannot fail to succeed.

August 29. — Besides Mrs. and Admiral Adam, Mrs. Loch, and Miss Adam, I find here Mr. Impey, son of that Sir Elijah celebrated in Indian history. He has himself been in India, but has, with a great deal of sense and observation, much better address than always falls to the share of the Eastern adventurer. The art of

[1] [Sir Frederick Adam, son of the Chief-Commissioner, a distinguished soldier, afterward Governor of Madras. He died in 1853.]

quiet, easy, entertaining conversation is, I think, chiefly known in England. In Scotland we are pedantic, and wrangle, or we run away with the harrows on some topic we chance to be discursive upon. In Ireland they have too much vivacity, and are too desirous to make a show, to preserve the golden mean. They are the Gascons of Britain. George Ellis was the first converser I ever knew; his patience and good-breeding made me often ashamed of myself going off at score upon some favorite topic. Richard Sharp is so celebrated for this peculiar gift as to be generally called *Conversation Sharp*.[1] The worst of this talent is, that it seems to lack sincerity. You never know what are the real sentiments of a good converser, or at least it is very difficult to discover in what extent he entertains them. His politeness is inconsistent with energy. For forming a good converser, good taste and extensive information and accomplishment are the principal requisites, to which must be added an easy and elegant delivery, and a well-toned voice. I think the higher order of genius is not favorable to this talent.

Thorough, decided downfall of rain. Nothing for it but patience and proof sheets.

August 30. — The weather scarce permitted us more license than yesterday, yet we went down to Lochore, and Walter and I perambulated the property, and discussed the necessity of a new road from the southwest, also that of planting some willows along the ditches in the low grounds. Returned to Blair-Adam to dinner.

Abbotsford, August 31. — Left Blair at seven in the morning. Transacted business with Cadell and Ballantyne. Arrived here at eight o'clock at night.

[1] Mr. Sharp published, in 1834, a very elegant and interesting little volume of *Letters and Essays in Prose and Verse.* See *Quarterly Review*, No. 102. [He was bred to a commercial life, and amassed a considerable fortune in business ; but he always took a keen interest in politics and literature, sat for a number of years in Parliament, and was a familiar guest at Holland House. He died in 1835, in his seventy-sixth year.]

September 6. — Walter being to return to Ireland for three weeks set off to-day, and has taken Charles with him. I fear this is but a wild plan, but the prospect seemed to make them so happy, that I could not find in my heart to say "No." So away they went this morning to be as happy as they can. Youth is a fine carver and gilder. I had a letter from Jem Ballantyne, plague on him! full of remonstrance, deep and solemn, upon the carelessness of Buonaparte. The rogue is right, too. But, as to correcting my style, to the

"Jemmy jemmy linkum feedle"

tune of what is called fine writing, I 'll be d——d if I do. Drew £12 in favor of Charles for his Irish jaunt; same time exhorted him to make himself as expensive to Walter, in the way of eating and drinking, as he could.

September 8. — Sir Frederick Adam deeply regrets the present Greek war, as prematurely undertaken before knowledge and rational education had extended themselves sufficiently. The neighborhood of the Ionian Islands was fast producing civilization; and as knowledge is power, it is clear that example and opportunities of education must soon have given them an immense superiority over the Turk. This premature war has thrown all back into a state of barbarism. It was, I cannot doubt, precipitated by the agents of Russia. Sir Frederick spoke most highly of Byron — the soundness of his views, the respect in which he was held — his just ideas of the Grecian cause and character, and the practical and rational wishes he formed for them. Singular that a man whose conduct in his own personal affairs had been anything but practical should be thus able to stand by the helm of a sinking State! Sir Frederick thinks he might have done much for them if he had lived. The rantipole friends of liberty, who go about freeing nations

with the same success which Don Quixote had in redressing wrongs, have, of course, blundered everything which they touched. — Task bang-up.

September 12. — I begin to fear Nap. will swell to seven volumes. I had a long letter from James B., threatening me with eight; but that is impossible. The event of his becoming Emperor is the central point of his history. Now I have just attained it, and it is the centre of the third volume. Two volumes and a half may be necessary to complete the whole. — As I slept for a few minutes in my chair, to which I am more addicted than I could wish, I heard, as I thought, my poor wife call me by the familiar name of fondness which she gave me. My recollections on waking were melancholy enough. These be

"The airy tongues that syllable men's names." [1]

All, I believe, have some natural desire to consider these unusual impressions as bodements of good or evil to come. But alas, this is a prejudice of our own conceit. They are the empty echoes of what is past, not the foreboding voice of things to come.

September 13. — Wrote my task in the morning, and thereafter had a letter from that sage Privy-Councillor [and booby of a Baronet] ——. He proposes to me that I shall propose to the [Dowager Duchess] of ——, and offers his own right honorable intervention to bring so beautiful a business to bear. I am struck dumb — absolutely mute and speechless — and how to prevent him making me further a fool is not easy, for he has left me no time to assure him of the absurdity of what he proposes; and if he should ever hint at such a piece of d——d impertinence, what must the lady think of my conceit or of my feelings! I will write to his present quar-

[1] Milton's *Comus*, v. 208.

ters, however, that he may, if possible, have warning not to continue this absurdity.[1]

September 14. — I should not have forgotten, among the *memorabilia* of yesterday, that two young Frenchmen made their way to our sublime presence, in guerdon of a laudatory copy of French verses sent up the evening before, by way of "Open Sesame," I suppose. I have not read them, nor shall I. No man that ever wrote a line despised the *pap* of praise so heartily as I do. There is nothing I scorn more, except those who think the ordinary sort of praise or censure is matter of the least consequence. People have almost always some private view of distinguishing themselves, or of gratifying their animosity — some point, in short, to carry, with which you have no relation — when they take the trouble to praise you. In general, it is their purpose to get the person praised to puff away in return. To me their rank praises no more make amends for their bad poetry, than tainted butter would pass off stale fish.

September 17. — Rather surprised with a letter from Lord Melville, informing me he and Mr. Peel had put me into the Commission for inquiring into the condition of the Colleges in Scotland. I know little on the subject, but I dare say as much as some of the official persons who are inserted of course. The want of efficient men is the reason alleged. I must of course do my best, though I have little hope of being useful, and the time it will occupy is half ruinous to me, to whom time is everything. Besides, I suppose the honor is partly meant as an act of grace for Malachi.

[1] Lady Scott had not been quite four months dead, and the entry of the preceding day shows how extremely ill-timed was this communication, from a gentleman with whom Sir Walter had never had any intimacy. This was not the only proposition of the kind that reached him during his widowhood. In the present case there was very high rank and an ample fortune.

Jedburgh, September 19. — Circuit. Went to poor Mr. Shortreed's, and regretted bitterly the distress of the family, though they endeavored to bear it bravely, and to make my reception as comfortable and cheerful as possible. My old friend R. S. gave me a ring found in a grave at the Abbey, to be kept in memory of his son. I will certainly preserve it with especial care.[1]

Many trifles at circuit, chiefly owing to the cheap whiskey, as they were almost all riots. One case of an assault on a deaf and dumb woman. She was herself the chief evidence; but being totally without education, and having, from her situation, very imperfect notions of a Deity and a future state, no oath could be administered. Mr. Kinniburgh, teacher of the deaf and dumb, was sworn interpreter, together with another person, her neighbor, who knew the accidental or conventional signs which the poor thing had invented for herself, as Mr. K. was supposed to understand the more general or natural signs common to people in such a situation. He went through the task with much address, and it was wonderful to see them make themselves intelligible to each other by mere pantomime. Still I did not consider such evidence as much to be trusted to on a criminal case. Several previous interviews had been necessary between the interpreter and the witness, and this is very much like getting up a story. Some of the signs, brief in themselves, of which Mr. K. gave long interpretations, put me in mind of Lord Burleigh in the Critic. "Did he mean all this by a shake of the head?" "Yes, if he shook his head as I taught him." The man was found not guilty. Mr. K. told us of a pupil of his whom he restored, as it may be said, to humanity, and who told him that his ideas of another world were that some great person in the skies lighted up the sun in the morning as

[1] Mr. Thomas Shortreed, a young gentleman of elegant taste and attainments, devotedly attached to Sir Walter, and much beloved in return, had recently died.

he saw his mother light a fire, and the stars in the evening as she kindled a lamp. He said the witness had ideas of truth and falsehood, which was, I believe, true; and that she had an idea of punishment in a future state, which I doubt. He confessed she could not give any guess at its duration, whether temporary or eternal. Dined of course with Lord Mackenzie, the Judge.

September 20. — Waked after a restless night, in which I dreamed of poor Tom Shortreed. Breakfasted with the Rev. Dr. Somerville. This venerable gentleman is one of the oldest of the literary brotherhood — I suppose about eighty-seven,[1] — and except a little deafness, quite entire. Living all his life in good society as a gentleman born — and having, besides, professional calls to make among the poor — he must know, of course, much that is curious concerning the momentous changes which have passed under his eyes. He talked of them accordingly, and has written something on the subject, but has scarce the force necessary to seize on the most striking points. The bowl that rolls easiest along the green goes farthest, and has the least clay sticking to it. I have often noticed that a kindly, placid good-humor is the companion of longevity, and, I suspect, frequently the leading cause of it. Quick, keen, sharp observation, with the power of contrast and illustration, disturbs this easy current of thought. My good friend, the venerable Doctor, will not, I think, die of that disease.

September 23. — Wrought in the morning, but only at reading and proofs. That cursed battle of Jena is

[1] The Rev. Dr. Thomas Somerville, minister of Jedburgh, author of the *History of Great Britain during the Reign of Queen Anne*, and other works, died 14th May, 1830, in the 90th year of his age, and 64th of his ministry. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 235. [Some autobiographical memorials, *My Own Life and Times*, 1741–1814, were published in 1861. Dr. Somerville was the uncle and father-in-law of the distinguished mathematician and physicist, Mrs. Somerville, who was born in the Jedburgh manse.]

like to cost me more time than it did Buonaparte to gain it. I met Colonel Ferguson about one, to see his dogs run. It is a sport I have loved well; but now, I know not why, I find it little interesting. To be sure, I used to gallop, and that I cannot now do. We had good sport, however, and killed five hares. I felt excited during the chase, but the feeling was but momentary. My mind was immediately turned to other remembrances, and to pondering upon the change which had taken place in my own feelings. The day was positively heavenly, and the wild hillside, with our little coursing party, was beautiful to look at. Yet I felt like a man come from the dead, looking with indifference on that which interested him while living. We dined at Huntly Burn. Kind and comfortable as usual.

September 24. — I made a rally to-day, and wrote four pages, or nearly. Never stirred abroad the whole day, but was made happy after dinner by the return of Charles, full of his Irish jaunt, and happy as young men are with the change of scene. To-morrow I must go to Melville Castle. I wonder what I can do or say about these Universities. One thing occurs — the distribution of bursaries only *ex meritis*. That is, I would have the presentations continue in the present patrons, but exact that those presented should be qualified by success in their literary attainments and distinction acquired at school to hold those scholarships. This seems to be following out the idea of the founders, who, doubtless, intended the furthering of good literature. To give education to dull mediocrity is a flinging of the children's bread to dogs — it is sharpening a hatchet on a razor-strop, which renders the strop useless, and does no good to the hatchet. Well, something we will do.

Melville Castle, September 25. — Found Lord and Lady M. in great distress. Their son Robert is taken

ill at a Russian town about 350 miles from Moscow — dangerously ill. The distance increases the extreme distress of the parents, who, however, bore it like themselves. I was glad to spend a day upon the old terms with such old friends, and believe my being with them, even in this moment of painful suspense, as it did not diminish the kindness of my reception, might rather tend to divert them from the cruel subject. Dr. Nicoll, Principal of St. Andrews, dined — a very gentlemanlike, sensible man. We spoke of the visitation, of granting degrees, of public examinations, of abolishing the election of professors by the Senatus Academicus (a most pregnant source of jobs), and much beside — but all desultory. I go back to Abbotsford to-morrow morning.

Abbotsford, September 29. — A sort of zeal of working has seized me, which I must avail myself of. No dejection of mind, and no tremor of nerves, for which God be humbly thanked. My spirits are neither low nor high — grave, I think, and quiet — a complete twilight of the mind. I wrote five pages, nearly a double task, yet wandered for three hours, axe in hand, superintending the thinning of the home planting. That does good too. I feel it give steadiness to my mind. Women, it is said, go mad much seldomer than men. I fancy, if this be true, it is in some degree owing to the little manual works in which they are constantly employed, which regulate in some degree the current of ideas, as the pendulum regulates the motion of the time-piece. I do not know if this is sense or nonsense; but I am sensible that if I were in solitary confinement, without either the power of taking exercise or employing myself in study, six months would make me a madman or an idiot.

October 3. — I wrote my task as usual; — but, strange to tell, there is a want of paper. I expect some to-day. In the mean time, to avoid all quarrel with Dame Duty,

I cut up some other leaves into the usual statutory size. They say of a fowl, that if you draw a chalk line on a table, and lay chick-a-diddle down with his bill upon it, the poor thing will imagine himself opposed by an insurmountable barrier, which he will not attempt to cross. Suchlike are one half of the obstacles which serve to interrupt our best resolves, and such is my pretended want of paper. It is like Sterne's want of *sous*, when he went to relieve the *Pauvre Honteux*.

October 5. — I was thinking this morning that my time glided away in a singularly monotonous manner, — like one of those dark gray days which neither promise sunshine nor threaten rain — too melancholy for enjoyment, too tranquil for repining. But this day has brought a change which somewhat shakes my philosophy. I find, by a letter from J. Gibson, that I *may* go to London without danger; and if I may, I in a manner *must*, to examine the papers in the Secretary of State's office about Buonaparte when at St. Helena. The opportunity having been offered, must be accepted; and yet I had much rather stay at home. Even the prospect of seeing Sophia and Lockhart must be mingled with pain; — yet this is foolish too. Lady Hamilton[1] writes me that Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Minister at Paris, is willing to communicate to me some particulars of Buonaparte's early life. Query — might I not go on there? In for a penny, in for a pound. I intend to take Anne with me, and the pleasure will be great to her, who deserves much at my hand.

October 9. — A gracious letter from Messrs. Abud and Son, bill-brokers, etc.; assure my trustees that they will institute no legal proceedings against me for four or

[1] Now Lady Jane Hamilton Dalrymple — the eldest daughter of the illustrious Admiral Lord Duncan. Her Ladyship's kindness procured several valuable communications to the author of the *Life of Buonaparte*.

five weeks. And so I am permitted to spend my money and my time to improve the means of paying them their debts, for that is the only use of this journey. They are Jews: I suppose the devil baits for Jews with a pork griskin. Were I not to exert myself, I wonder where their money is to come from.

October 10. — I must prepare for going to London, and perhaps to Paris. I have great unwillingness to set out on this journey; I almost think it ominous; but

> "They that look to freits, my master dear,
> Their freits will follow them." [1]

I am down-hearted about leaving all my things, after I was quietly settled; it is a kind of disrooting that recalls a thousand painful ideas of former happier journeys. And to be at the mercy of these fellows. God help — but rather God bless — man must help himself.

October 11. — We are ingenious self-tormentors. This journey annoys me more than anything of the kind in my life. My wife's figure seems to stand before me, and her voice is in my ears, "Scott, do not go." It half frightens me. Strange throbbing at my heart, and a disposition to be very sick. It is just the effect of so many feelings which had been lulled asleep by the uniformity of my life, but which awaken on any new subject of agitation. Poor, poor Charlotte!! I cannot daub it farther. I get incapable of arranging my papers too. I will go out for half an hour. God relieve me!

[1] [See ballad of *Edom of Gordon.*]

END OF VOLUME EIGHT